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GARDENS
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An inspirational new garden by
Tom Stuart-Smith

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TRENDS FOR
2019

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EDITOR'S LETTER

Alongside the idea of sustainability – reducing and recycling plastic, avoiding peat composts and buying fewer (but better) things – is the idea of slow design. The Slow Movement is perhaps most familiar to us in terms of the food we eat, grown locally and eaten in season. 'Slow' isn't about moving at a snail's pace but rather seeking to do things at a speed that is right. This isn't news to gardeners, but it is less frequently considered in terms of garden design.

La Granja Alnardo in central Spain is a garden designed by Tom Stuart-Smith and actively gardened by its owner Peter Sisseck. "Never have I felt more strongly that what I am doing as a designer is setting a process in motion, as it were, pushing the boat out into the water," Tom told garden critic Tim Richardson. The range of plants used at La Granja Alnardo is rhythmically intensive but narrow, as is Tom's horticultural signature, and slow growth is accepted. Achillea, dianthus, phillyrea, cistus and other native shrubs create a hummocky landscape; it is difficult to tell where nature ends and the garden begins. It is a garden created thoughtfully and with intent.

January means planning ahead and in this issue our favourite plantspeople share the plants they are most excited about growing in 2019. Growers for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, Hortus Loci, flag up the best new shrub introduction in the past few years, The Land Gardeners, Henrietta Courtauld and Bridget Elworthy, highlight a scented rhododendron (recommending bringing it indoors during flowering) and nurserywoman Claire Austin notes an autumn-flowering aster with black stems and small lilac-pink flowers.

With cold, bright days outdoor in mind, Joshua Sparkes, head gardener at Forde Abbey in Somerset, digs more deeply into soil. He challenges traditional thinking about how we can get the best from our gardens with practical tips to put into practice during the year ahead.

I hope you enjoy the issue,

Lucy Bellamy

LUCY BELLAMY, EDITOR

ANDREA JONES

Tom Stuart-Smith's design for La Granja Alnardo in Spain is slow design at its best, page 34.

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CLAIRE TAKACS

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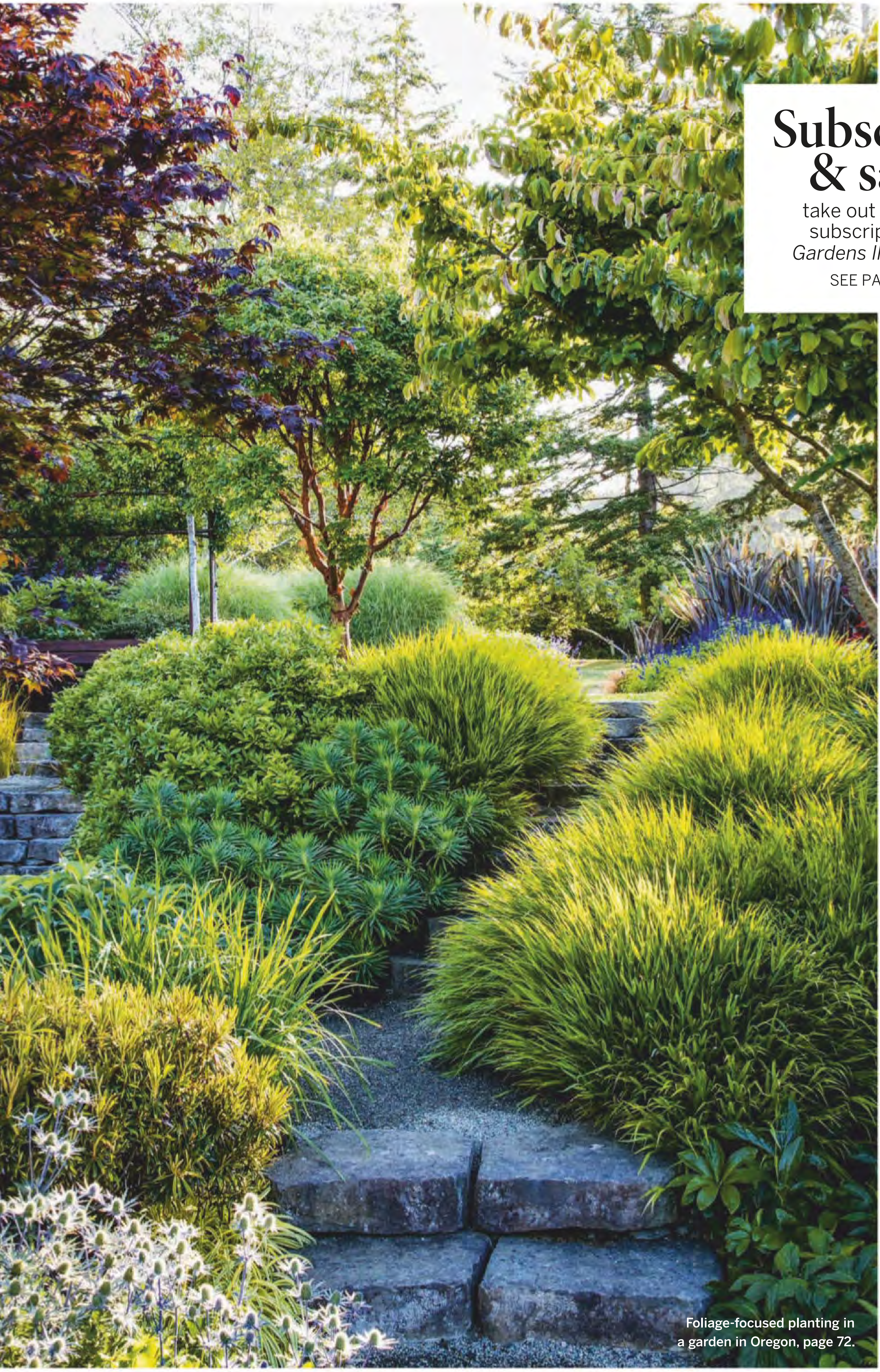

Foliage-focused planting in a garden in Oregon, page 72.

COVER IMAGE

The garden at
La Granja Alnardo
by Andrea Jones

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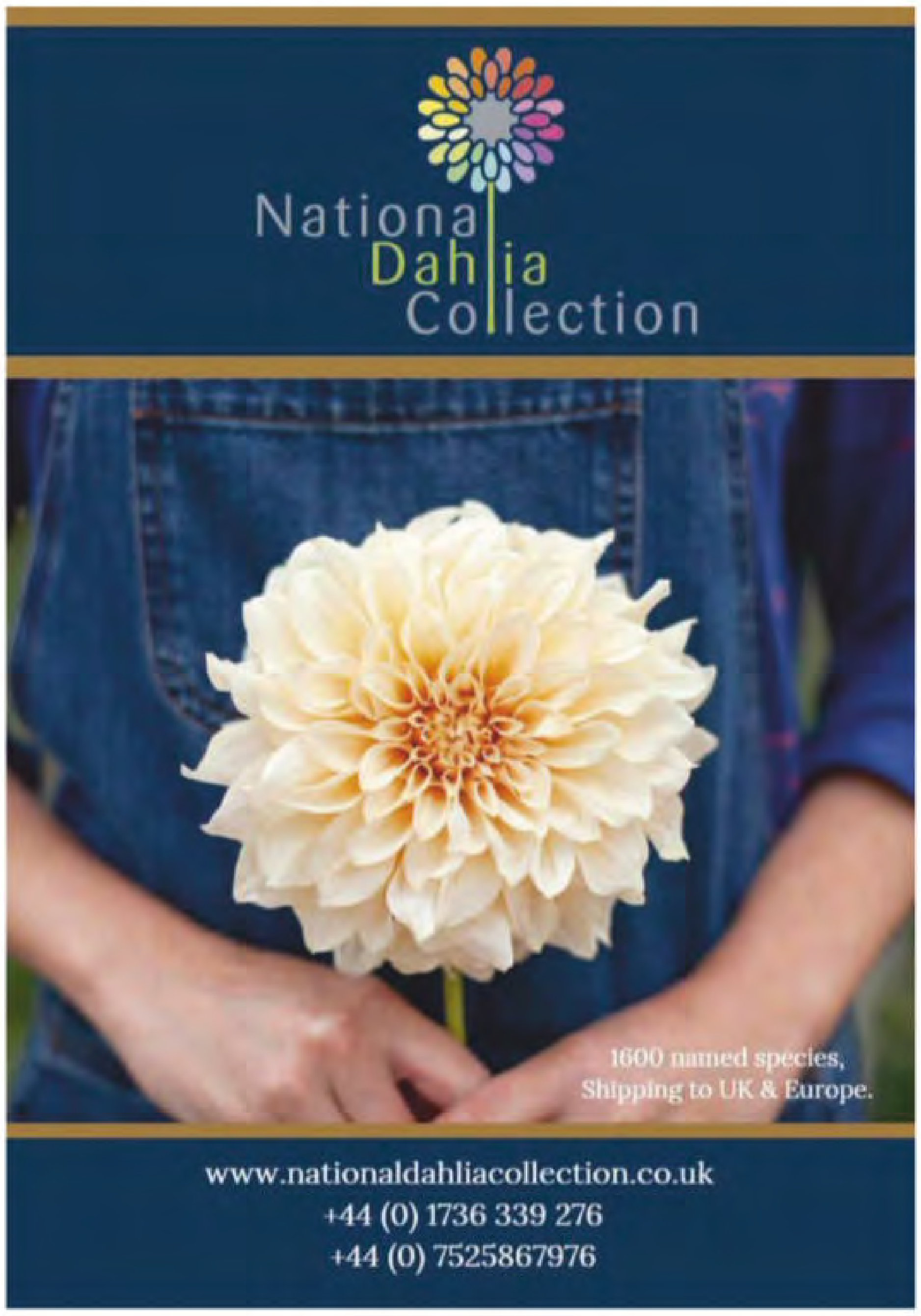
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JESS SNOWBALL

Jess begins a new column on caring for houseplants, page 114. *"Sharing your home with plants creates unique relationships, and almost every houseplant has a fascinating story to tell."*

TIM RICHARDSON

Tim gets vertigo visiting an Andrea Cochran garden, page 64. *"I've followed Andrea's work for years and she is arguably the most successful garden designer in the USA."*

AGATA WIERZBICKA

Agata illustrates our new houseplant column, page 114 *"It is amazing how much we still can learn about the plants that have been accompanying our lives for years."*

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JAMES BASSON

James lives in the South of France where he runs Scape Design with his wife Helen, specialising in low-maintenance and dry gardens. He is a fervent advocate for creating sustainable landscapes. The winner of four Chelsea Gold medals, he was awarded Best in Show in 2017.

FERGUS GARRETT

Fergus was appointed head gardener at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd in 1993. He is passionate about passing on his knowledge through student and volunteer programmes at Dixter and through worldwide lectures. He was awarded an RHS Associate of Honour in 2008.

ANNA PAVORD

Anna's books include her bestseller *The Tulip* and most recently *Landskipping*. For 30 years she was *The Independent*'s gardening correspondent. In 2000 the RHS awarded her the Veitch Memorial Medal. She lives and gardens in Dorset.

DAN PEARSON

Dan is one of the UK's best-known garden designers, familiar to many through his gardening columns in the *Observer* magazine. Eight of his gardens, including the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan, have won awards and he was awarded Best in Show at Chelsea in 2015.

SARAH PRICE

Sarah is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who won worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 London Olympic Park. She won Gold at Chelsea in 2012 and 2018, and was GMG Garden Columnist of the Year in 2016 for her design series in *Gardens Illustrated*.

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READER EVENTS 2019

From intimate talks from leading designers to exclusive access to outstanding gardens (in the UK and abroad) our 2019 calendar of events has something to offer every gardener

MONDAY 4 MARCH

GREAT DIXTER SPRING GARDENING DAY

Join Great Dixter's head gardener **Fergus Garrett** for a day learning how to prepare your garden for the year ahead. Fergus will look at creating a timetable, composting and soil preparation, weeding, choosing annuals, sowing, pricking out and thinning. Includes lunch and a tour of the garden.
Location Great Dixter, Northiam, Rye, East Sussex TN31 6PH.
Price £110 (must be booked in advance)*
To book go to gardensillustrated.com/events or call UK 0871 230 7156† Overseas +44 115 896 0368.

9-12 APRIL

CORNISH SPRING GARDENS

Spring comes early to the UK's southwest peninsula. Join this *Gardens Illustrated* reader holiday to celebrate the season and immerse yourself in the beauty of the outstanding coastal valley gardens of Cornwall. Gardens explored include **Tregrehan**, **Caerhays**, **Trewithen**, and **Tregothnan**, as well as taking lunch with **Charles Fox** at **Glendurgan** to learn about his family's fascinating history of plant hunting.
This tour has been arranged exclusively for readers of *Gardens Illustrated* by Boxwood Tours.
Price £2,295 per person (single supplement applies). For more information or to book please contact Boxwood.
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FRIDAY 26 APRIL

HORTUS LOCI CHELSEA PREVIEW DAY

An opportunity for a behind-the-scenes preview of the plants destined for Chelsea Flower Show's top gardens, with a private tour at the nursery of growers Hortus Loci and a talk from a Chelsea designer who will gives us insights into their garden for this year's show. Your day includes lunch and the opportunity to buy plants from this well-stocked nursery.
Location The Plant Centre, Hortus Loci, Hound Green, Hook, Hampshire RG27 8LQ.
Price £85*. **To book** tickets go on sale 1 February from gardensillustrated.com/events or call UK 0871 230 7156† Overseas +44 115 896 0368.

24-30 MAY

THE FLORA AND GARDENS OF CENTRAL SPAIN

Discover some of Spain's classic gardens and exciting contemporary designs on our tour of **Madrid** and the **Sierra de Guadarrama.** The Iberian Peninsula is botanically rich, and Spain has the second largest number of plant species in Europe. The tour includes a trip into the mountains to enjoy the wildflowers, which should be at their best in late May, plus leading designers **Miguel Urquijo** and **Fernado Martos** will discuss their garden designs and the realities of plant selection for a difficult climate. Led by plant expert **Noel Kingsbury.**
This tour has been arranged exclusively for readers of *Gardens Illustrated* by Distant Horizons.
Price £2,250 per person (single supplement applies, flights not included). For more information or to book please contact Distant Horizons.
Tel 0151 625 3425.
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11-14 JUNE

THE ENGLISH ROSE TOUR

Rose enthusiasts are invited to join us on *Gardens Illustrated*'s second tour in celebration of the rose. Following our highly successful first Rose Tour in 2018 to Shropshire's rose gardens, we now explore some of the classic gardens in the south of England, including **Sissinghurst Castle**, **Mottisfont Abbey** and a selection of private, rose-focused gardens. Rosarian **Michael Marriott** will once again offer insight and valuable information on growing these quintessentially English garden flowers.
This tour has been arranged exclusively for readers of *Gardens Illustrated* by Boxwood Tours.
Price £2,290 per person (single supplement applies). For more information or to book please contact Boxwood.
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SATURDAY 22 JUNE

SUPPER CLUB WITH JINNY BLOM

Join us to celebrate the enchanting evenings of midsummer and delight in all things gardening. Hosted by Hortus Loci nursery, you'll arrive mid afternoon for a talk by award-winning designer **Jinny Blom**. She'll discuss her approach to planting design and some of the projects she is working on currently. There's the chance to tour the nursery, which will be growing plants ready for RHS Hampton Court Flower Show, and then relax with dinner and a drink inspired by seasonal and local produce.
Location The Plant Centre, Hortus Loci, Hound Green, Hook, Hampshire RG27 8LQ.
Price £100 (must be booked in advance)*.
To book tickets go on sale 30 April from gardensillustrated.com/events or call UK 0871 230 7156† Overseas +44 115 896 0368.

27-30 SEPTEMBER

GARDENS OF VARENGEVILLE AND HAUTE NORMANDIE

Take a long weekend in France to focus on the garden-rich village of **Varengeville-sur-Mer** with visits to **Bois des Moutiers**, **Le Vasterival**, **Shamrock Hydrangea Collection** and **Jardin Plume** plus other private gardens all looking their glorious best in September.
This tour has been arranged exclusively for readers of *Gardens Illustrated* by Boxwood Tours.
For more information about the trip, the price or to book please contact Boxwood.
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• You'll find us at other events through the year, too. We have a stand at **RHS Chelsea Flower Show**, 21-25 May, and this year we will be hosting a VIP area at the **Woburn Abbey Garden Show**, 22-23 June (woburnabbey.co.uk). Keep an eye on the magazine and on our website for news of further events throughout the year.

* A transaction fee applies to bookings.
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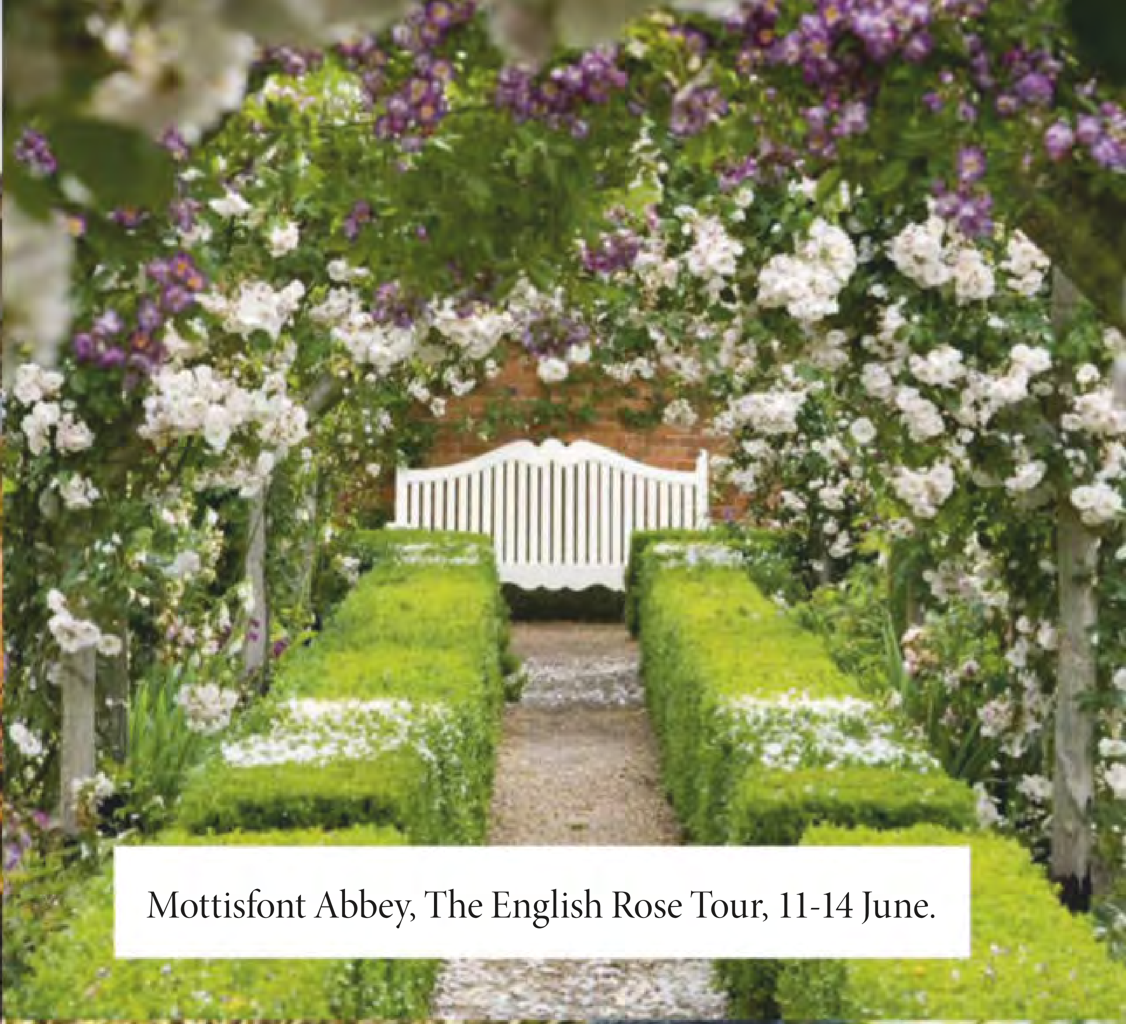
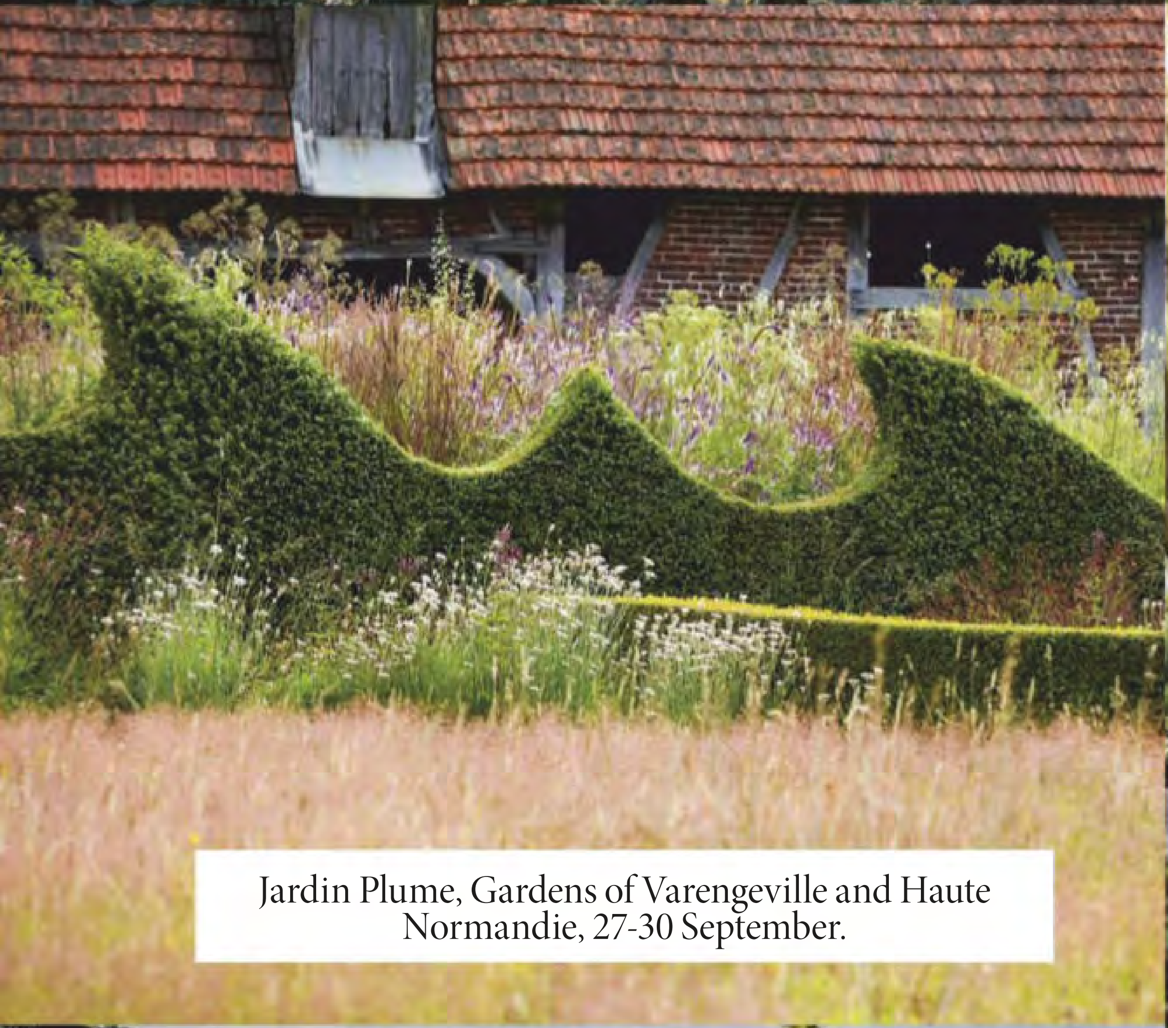
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CLAIRE TAKACS; THE NATIONAL TRUST PHOTOLIBRARY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; ANDREW MONTGOMERY; LYNNE KEDDIE; THE NATIONAL TRUST PHOTOLIBRARY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; CHARLES HAWES / GAP PHOTOS

Private garden designed by Fernando Martos, The Flora and Gardens of Central Spain, 24-30 May.

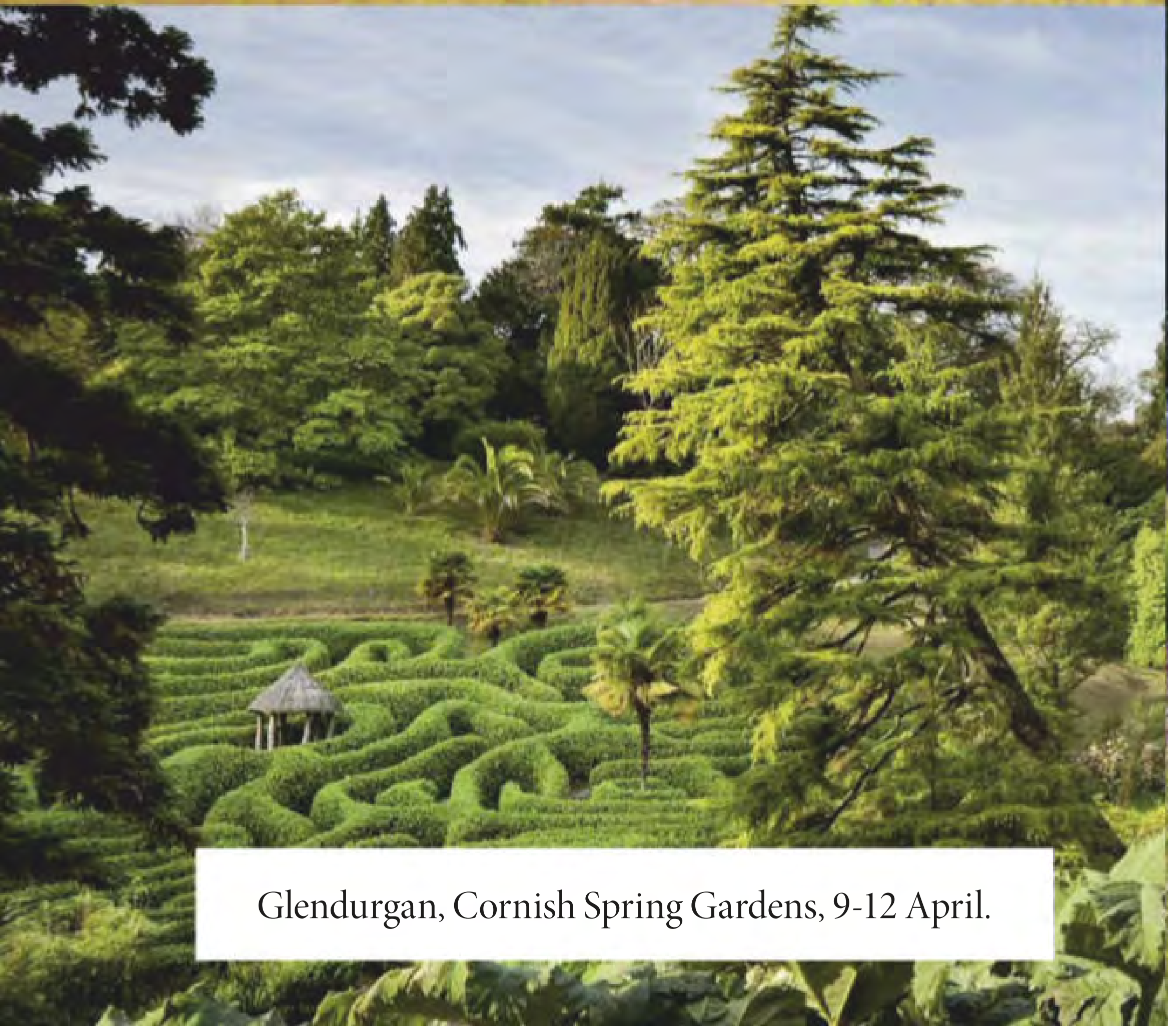


Mottisfont Abbey, The English Rose Tour, 11-14 June.

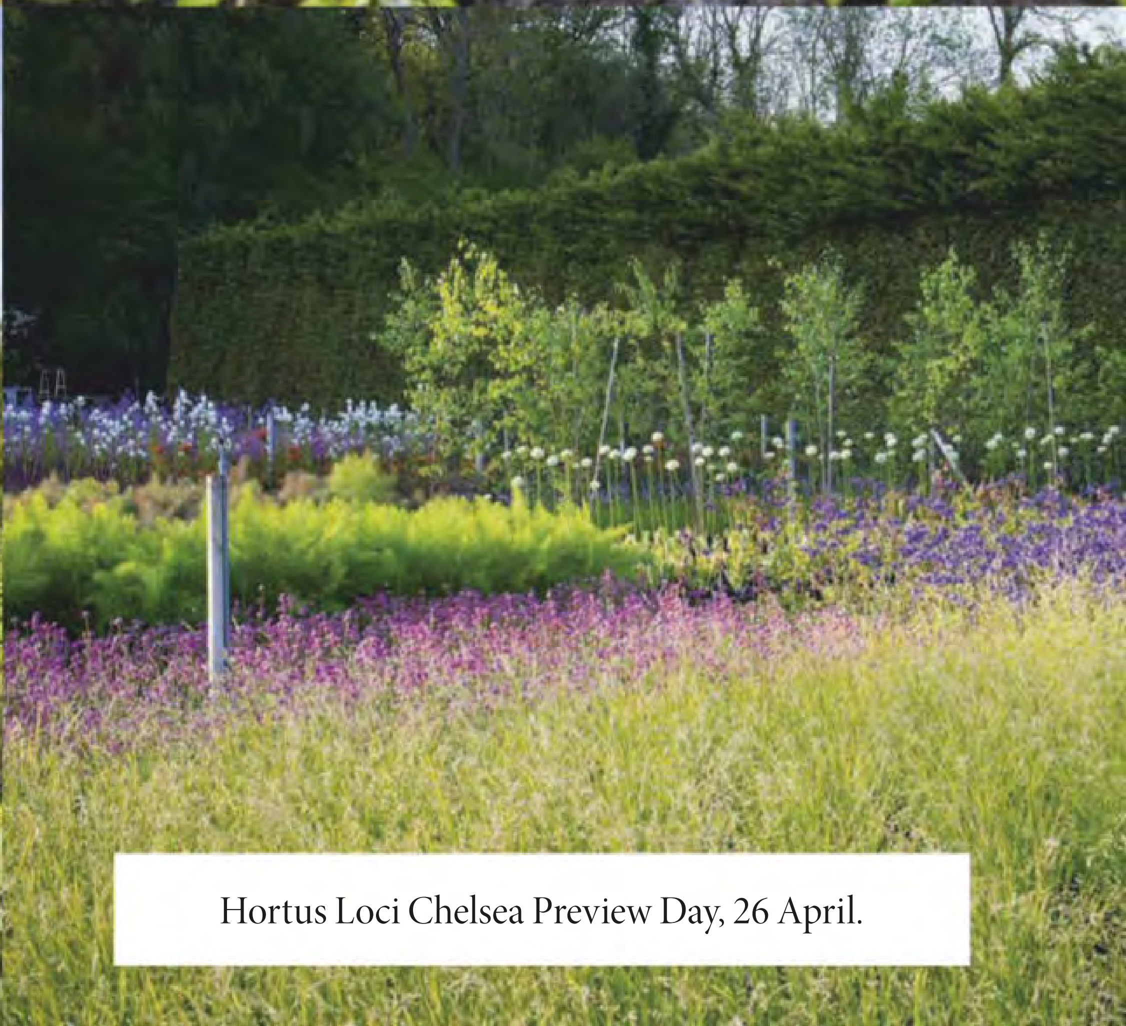


Jardin Plume, Gardens of Varengeville and Haute Normandie, 27-30 September.

Great Dixter Spring Gardening Day, 4 March.



Glendurgan, Cornish Spring Gardens, 9-12 April.



Hortus Loci Chelsea Preview Day, 26 April.

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7 – 11 May 2019 with Caroline Holmes

**FRONTIERS & FRESCOES:
HILL TOWNS OF UMBRIA**
15 – 20 May 2019 with Paula Nuttall

**POPES & PRINCES AT REST:
VILLAS & GARDENS OF LAZIO**
22 – 27 May 2019 with Tom Duncan

**OPERAS, VILLAS, GARDENS & WINE:
VERONA & THE VALPOLICELLA**
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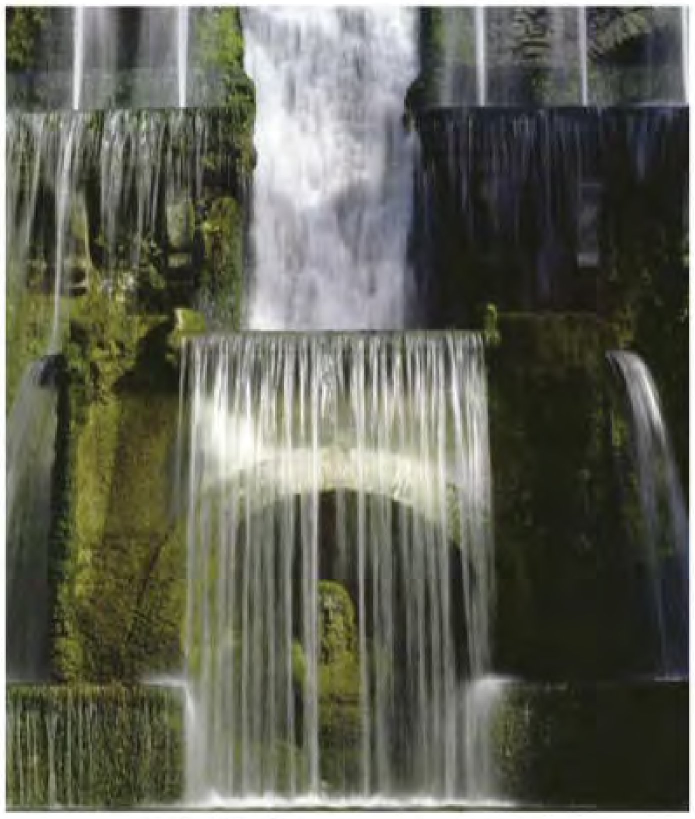

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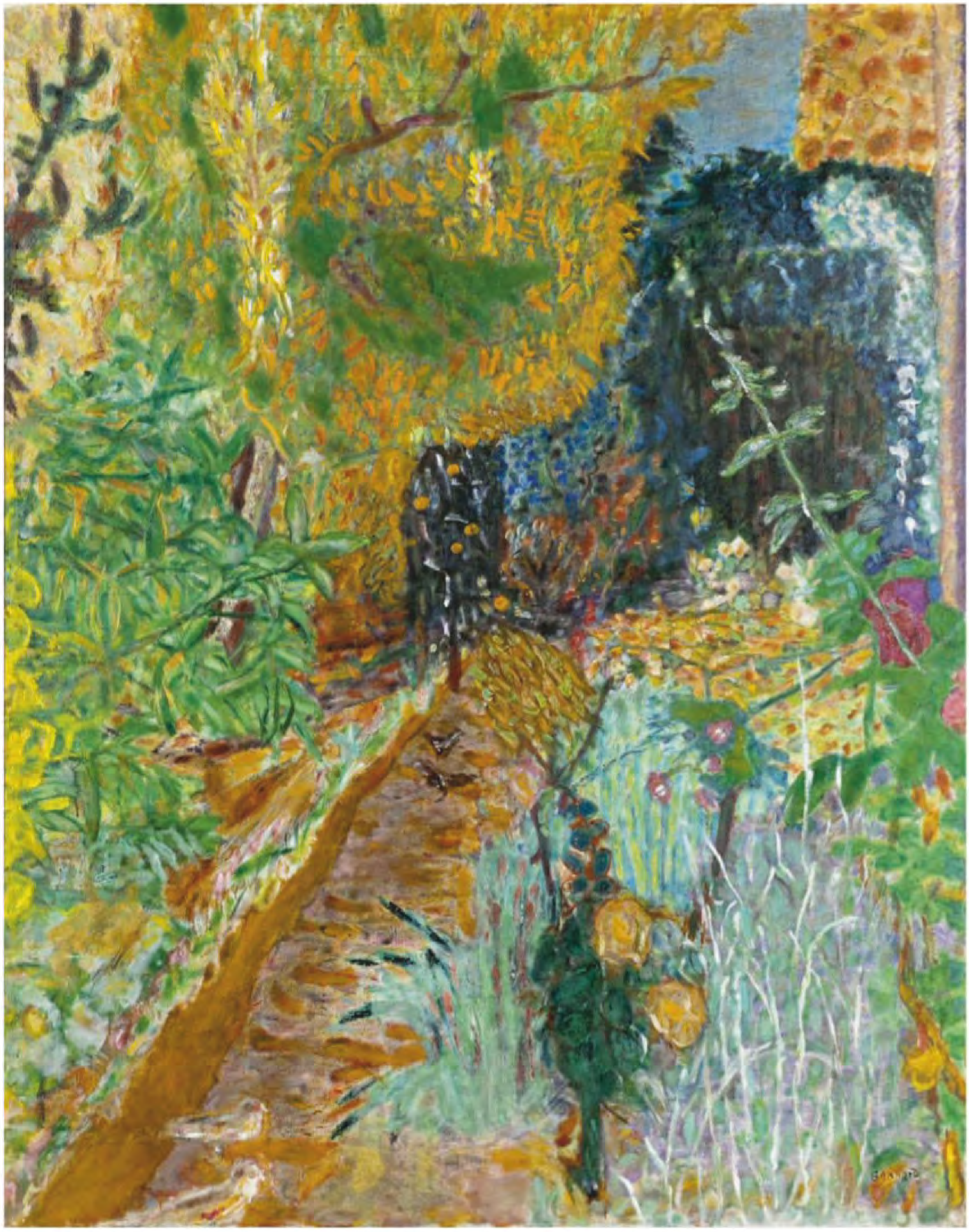
DIG IN

What's happening, where to go, what's in flower and what to buy this month



THE GARDEN, 1936. MUSÉE D'ART MODERNE DE LA VILLE DE PARIS/ ROGER-VIOLLET

VIVID MEMORIES

For many years the French artist Pierre Bonnard lived at Vernonnet just a mile away from Claude Monet at Giverny, and although the two artists differed in painting and gardening styles (Bonnard's garden was an overgrown jungle), they became good friends sharing a passion for capturing nature on canvas. Some of Bonnard's garden scenes, including *Le Jardin* (1936), above, are included in a new exhibition, *Pierre Bonnard: The Colour of Memory*, which opens at Tate Modern this month. Covering a period from 1912 to Bonnard's death in 1947, the exhibition celebrates the post-impressionist's ability to encapsulate memories and emotions, and brings together around 100 of his works. 23 January – 6 May. **tate.org.uk**

News

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ALL-WEATHER STYLE

Add a touch of class to outdoor furnishings with this new fabric range from Perennials in collaboration with Morris & Co. Featuring four of William Morris's iconic designs, such as Strawberry Thief (shown above) and Bachelor's Button, the range also includes four new designs inspired by Morris – all available in a range of colourways. Perennials' hard-wearing fabric is water repellent, and also resistant to colour-fading and stains, making it the perfect fabric for brightening up outdoor furniture when summer finally returns. ***perennialsfabrics.com***

JIM HOLDEN/WAKEHURST

WINTER WONDERLAND

Himalayan silver birch (*Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii*) with their stunning, pure-white trunks bring an ethereal beauty to the newly planted winter garden that opens this month at Wakehurst, Kew's sister garden in West Sussex. Bolder, brighter shades will also be on display in the form of *Cornus sanguinea* 'Midwinter Fire' and *C. sericea* 'Bud's Yellow', while coppery and bronze tones and texture comes from the bark of Tibetan cherry trees (*Prunus serrula*) and feathery *Calamagrostis* grass. More sensory delight is offered by daphne and witch hazel, adding fragrance at the edges of the winding path, alongside swathes of early season favourites, such as snowdrops, hellebores and cyclamen to draw the planting together. Open from 23 January. **kew.org/wakehurst**

Ground control

Get a better idea of your garden's microclimate with the new Weather Station from Netatmo. The weather-proof outdoor station measures humidity, temperature, air quality, weather conditions and barometric pressure, and lets you keep track of data over time on your smart phone or computer. You can also add on additional accessories, including a rain gauge (left) and wind gauge. Also included is an indoor station that monitors temperature, air-quality and humidity inside your home. The basic system costs £149 from **netatmo.com**

Gartenart
swimming ponds

dive into nature

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020 7183 3333 www.gartenart.co.uk

EARLY RISER

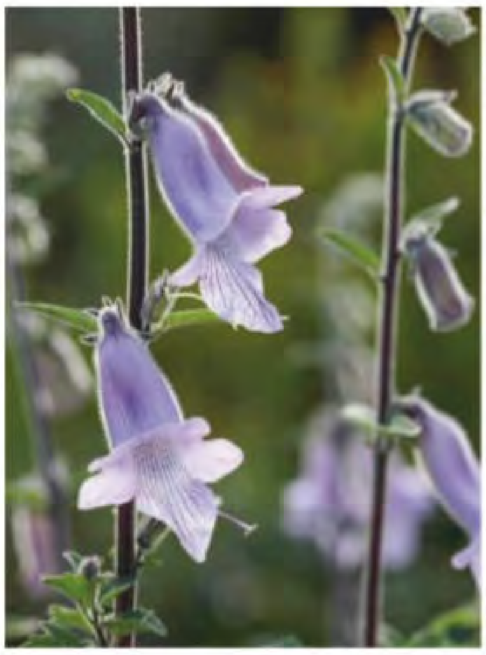
Snowdrops come early to the Chelsea Physic Garden, thanks to the unique microclimate created by its walled gardens near London's Chelsea Embankment. This year the garden will host a Heralding Spring event to celebrate its collection of more than 120 species of snowdrop when they are looking their best, The week-long celebration includes a trail through the dainty white flowers, drop-in workshops and an exclusive talk and guided tour from snowdrop expert Joe Sharman. Nell Jones, head of plant collections at Chelsea Physic Garden will also give a talk and there's an opportunity to buy snowdrops from a stunning selection of spring flowers supplied by Monkton Nursery. 26 January – 3 February. **chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk**

GALANTHUS NIVALIS 'MAGNET'

GREEN LIVING

It's that time of year again, when we all resolve to make ourselves that little bit better. If one of your New Year resolutions is to leave a lighter footprint on the planet then the new pocket-sized *50 Ways to Help the Planet* has plenty of ideas to help you lessen your environmental impact. Written by Green Party co-leader Siân Berry, *50 Ways...* is full of ideas for making greener choices, and includes chapters on plastics, travel and gardens, with tips on how to encourage wildlife into your garden and use water wisely. Priced £9.99 from **kylebooks.co.uk**

50 WAYS TO HELP THE PLANET
Easy ways to live a sustainable life
SIÂN BERRY

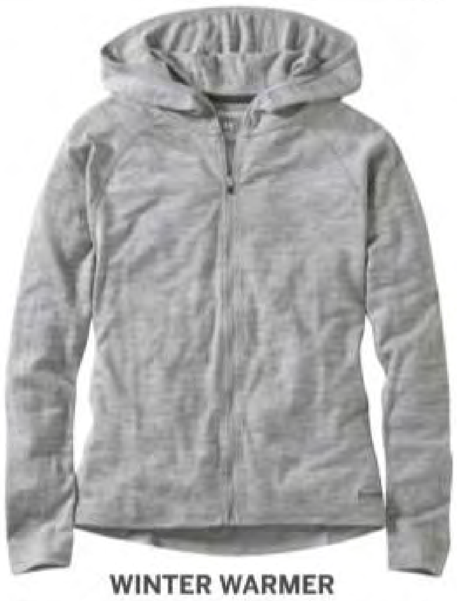


AFRICAN BEAUTY

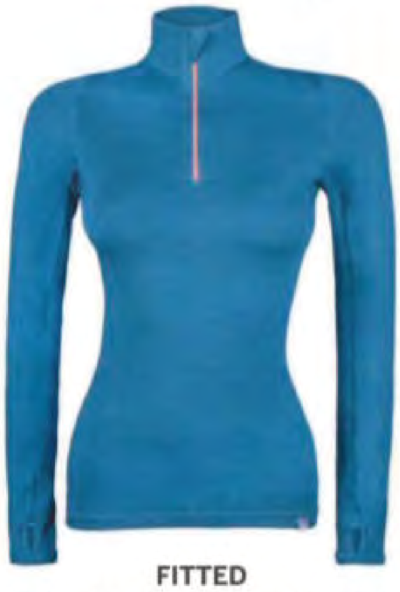
Ceratotheca triloba with its delicate lilac-pink flowers should be better known and is certainly a plant worth considering for your New Year seed list. This South African native produces foxglove-like flowers on tall spikes that can reach 1.5m in height. Sow under glass four to six weeks before the last expected frost and wait until the chance of frost has passed before planting out in full sun. Once established it is drought tolerant and will self seed freely. A packet of seeds costs £2.25 from **chilternseeds.co.uk**

NEIL OVERY / GAP PHOTOS

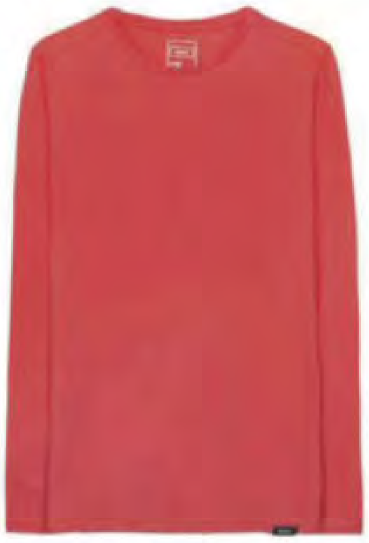
3 FOR THE GARDEN... ECO-FRIENDLY BASE LAYERS



WINTER WARMER
Merino Full Zip Hoody in grey marl,
£69, Howies,
01267 228444, howies.co.uk



FITTED
Zip-Neck Bamboo Baselayer in kingfisher blue,
£45, BAM,
01752 581458, bambooclothing.co.uk



SUPER SOFT
Pali Base Layer in hibiscus,
£50, Finisterre,
01872 554481, finisterre.com

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DIARY

COMPILED BY ALYS HURN AND ANNIE GATTI

RHS AND TIM SANDALL

① **Winter garden tours**
Explore the stunning Winter Garden at Cambridge University Botanic Garden, which this year celebrates its 40th anniversary. To mark the milestone, free one-hour tours will take place every Sunday through January and February. Visitors must sign up at Brookside Gate on the day and places are limited. From 6 January, tours leave from the Glasshouse Terrace at 2.30pm. Cambridge University Botanic Garden, 1 Brookside, Cambridge CB2 1JE. Tel 01223 336265, botanic.cam.ac.uk

② ***Handle with Care* Exhibition**
Discover how RHS Lindley Library protects and conserves its collections in this new exhibition, with many precious items, including the notebooks of 19th-century plant collectors, on display. 7 January – 15 February, 10am-5pm, Monday to Friday. Free. RHS Lindley Library, 80 Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PE. Tel 020 7821 3050, rhs.org.uk

③ **Traditional Orchard Management Workshop**
Learn how to prune traditional standard, half standard and bush trees on this one-day workshop, which will introduce you to the principles of seasonal orchard management. 9 January, 9.30am-3.30pm. £66. Thornhayes Nursery, St Andrews Wood, Dulford, Cullompton, Devon EX15 2DF. Tel 01884 266746, thornhayes-nursery.co.uk

④ **Encouraging Wildlife into Your Garden**
Get tips on how to make your garden more wildlife friendly from entomologist Andrew Halstead, in a talk organised by Plant Heritage's Hampshire & Isle of Wight group. 17 January. 7.30pm. Warnford Village Hall, nr Southampton, Hampshire SO32 3LE. Tel 01483 447540, nccpg.com

⑤ **Snowdrops and Other Winter Bulbs**
Find inspiration and advice on growing snowdrops and other winter bulbs from Avon Bulbs' creative maestro Alan Street, as part of part of Oxford Botanic Garden's Winter Lecture series. 24 January, 7pm. £15. Andrew Wiles Building, University of Oxford, Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 6CG. Tel 01865 610305, botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk

⑥ **Winter Tree Identification**
Learn how to identify trees in winter, on this one-day workshop designed to help you recognise trees by their shape and colour, and by the position and arrangements of buds on branches. 26 January, 10am. £50. Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh, Edinburgh EH3 5NZ. Tel 0131 248 2937, rbge.org.uk

⑦ **Big Garden Birdwatch**
Help the RSPB keep track on the birds visiting our gardens over winter in its annual big garden birdwatch. To take part all you need to do is count the number and species of birds that land in your garden during one hour on any of the three days on which the survey takes place. 26-28 January. Register at rspb.co.uk

⑧ **Design Your Own Garden Course**
Get a feel for garden design on this six-week design course, led by experienced designer and teacher Mary Swan. On the course you'll learn how to shape a space and analyse a site, and Mary will also look at the importance of soil testing. No design experience needed. Wednesday evenings from 30 January, 6.30-8.30pm. £95. Bowery Visual Arts, 54 Otley Road, Leeds LS6 2AL. Tel 0113 224 2284, thebowery.org

⑨ **Harlow Carr Flower School**
Master the basics of floristry and flower farming on this six-month course aimed at those who want to pursue a career in the industry. The workshop is run by Rachel Petheram of Catkin Flowers who will tailor each session to a different area of the business. Each month Rachel will be joined by a guest florist or flower grower. First session is 31 January, 10am-4pm. £2,000 for the whole course. RHS Garden Harlow Carr, Crag Lane, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG3 1QB. Tel 020 3176 5830, rhs.org.uk

⑩ **A Year in the Cut Flower Garden**
Book ahead for this fascinating talk from organic flower grower and florist Gabriel Reid of floristry studio Gabi's Garden on behalf of the NGS. Gabriel will share her experience of growing flowers and foliage and the best cultivars to grow for cutting. 27 February, 10.30am-12.30pm. £12. Gissing Community Building, nr Diss, Norfolk IP22 5XB. ngs.org.uk

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25 - 30 Jan	20th Anniversary Special - Spain
2 - 17 Feb	Rail & Natural Wonders of Sri Lanka
2 - 17 Feb	New Zealand In Style
15 - 31 Mar	Taiwan, North Borneo and S. Korea
21 - 28 Mar	Springtime in Lisbon
1 - 12 Apr	Springtime in Sicily
4 -11 Apr	Springtime in Switzerland
7 - 21 Apr	South Africa & Sandstone Festival
21 - 28 Apr	Classic Montenegro
23 - 30 Apr	Mainline Steam in Sardinia
3 - 13 May	Italian Vintage
9 - 16 May	Little Trains of the Dolomites
17 - 22 May	Really Hungary
18 - 23 May	Portugal - Linha do Corgo
18 - 25 May	West Scotland - In style
31 May - 4 Jun	Portmeirion and Snowdonia
2 - 10 Jun	Galician Paradores
4 - 11 Jun	Douro - Rail, River and Wine
6 - 13 Jun	Vintage Bruge in Steam
11 - 18 Jun	Vintage Central Portugal
17 - 24 Jun	Classic Bulgaria
21 Jun - 1 Jul	Vintage Slovenia
30 Jun - 12 Jul	Little Trains of Austria
5 - 14 Jul	The Grand Finland Circular
7 - 20 Jul	Rail & Natural Wonders of Alaska
8 - 17 Jul	South Western England
9 - 18 Jul	Hidden Slovenia
13 - 22 Jul	Vintage Slovakia (and Poland)
14 - 21 Jul	Rail Wonders of Norway
26 Jul - 2 Aug	A Royal Douro Cruise
2 - 17 Sep	Hidden Colombia by Rail
5 - 15 Sep	Vintage Port 41
20 - 29 Sep	El Transcantabrico
20 - 30 Sep	Southern France and the Pyrenees
21 - 29 Sep	Vintage Baltics
21 - 2 Oct	Wonders Serbia, Macedonia and Bulgaria
2 - 9 Oct	Vatican and Tuscany
3 - 17 Oct	Roman Iberia
12 - 19 Oct	Rail and Ancient Wonders of Israel
9 - 16 Oct	Vintage Pisa and Corsica
16 - 25 Oct	Rail Wonders of Sardinia
16 - 30 Oct	Trains & Treasures of the Western States
28 Oct - 4 Nov	Trams & Trains of Southern Spain 2
1 - 16 Nov	Classic Peru
3 - 17 Nov	The Colours and Cultures of North India
17 - 30 Nov	Southern India

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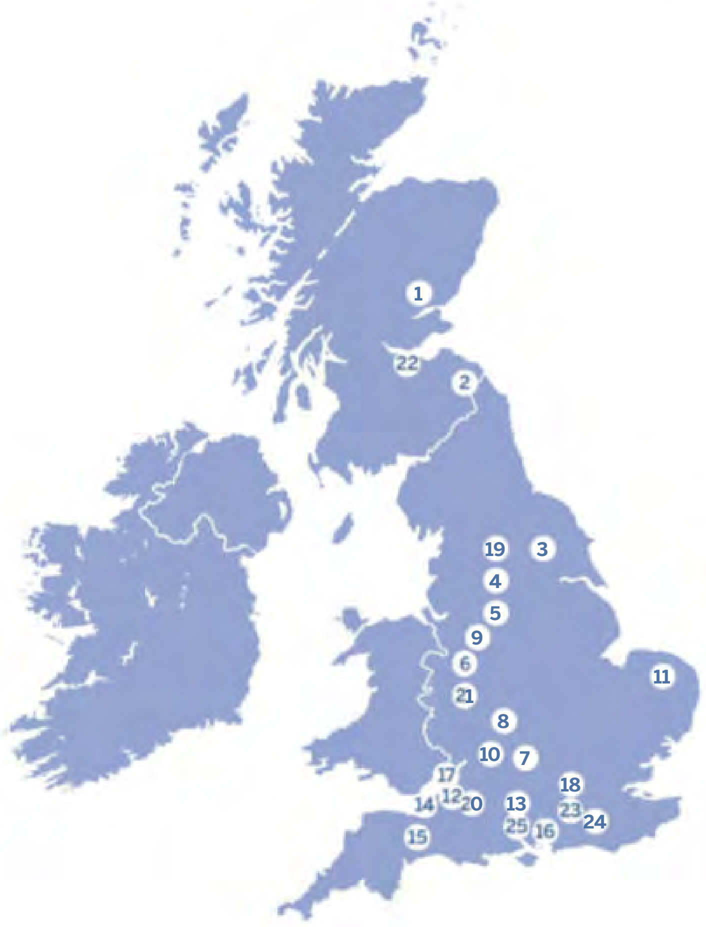

Garden Masterclass

A place to learn, to share, and to experience: knowledge, skills and ideas in gardening and garden design

Garden Masterclasses aim to bring together gardeners and designers with some of the most innovative people in the gardening world through one-day workshops.

ANNIE GUILFOYLE AND NOËL KINGSBURY, MASTERCLASS ORGANISERS

2019 workshop dates and venues: ***unless noted all days run from 10am–4.30pm.*** **Early bird booking discount until end of Jan 2019**

THURSDAY 4 APRIL £45 5.30PM
Yeo Valley Organic Gardens, Somerset (14)
Garden visit with supper and film screening of 'Five Seasons – The gardens of Piet Oudolf'

WEDNESDAY 17 APRIL £140
Yeo Valley Organic Gardens, Somerset (14)
Plants Grow in Dirt with Bob Brown and a propagation workshop with Andi Strachan

WEDNESDAY 1 MAY £130
Trentham Gardens, Staffordshire (6)
The Rabbit's Eye View – learning about long-term plant performance with Noel Kingsbury

WEDNESDAY 1 MAY £140
The Coach House, Gloucestershire (10)
Working a Concept through to Completion – a garden design workshop with Annie Guilfoyle

TUESDAY 28 & WEDNESDAY 29 MAY €300
*please note Euros
Col de la Gineste & Mèze, Southern France
Lessons in the Landscape – a two-day workshop with Helen & James Basson & Olivier Filippi

WEDNESDAY 12 JUNE £160 ▦
Thenford Arboretum, Northamptonshire (8)
Choosing Trees with John Grimshaw

TUESDAY 18 JUNE £140 ▦
Chatsworth Gardens, Derbyshire (9)
Beauty and Biodiversity, Water and Well-Being: Integrating Art and Ecology for Sustainable Gardens with Dr Nigel Dunnett

THURSDAY 20 JUNE £160
Hillside Gardens, Somerset (17)
Keying into Context – identifying and enhancing sense of place with Dan Pearson

FRIDAY 21 JUNE £160
Hillside Gardens, Somerset (17)
Keying into Context – identifying and enhancing sense of place with Dan Pearson

TUESDAY 25 JUNE £140 ▦
East Ruston Old Vicarage Gardens, Norfolk (11)
An introduction to Roses with Michael Marriott

TUESDAY 2 JULY £140
Bury Court, Hampshire (13)
Gardens through the Lens – a photography workshop with Jason Ingram

WEDNESDAY 3 JULY €150 *please note Euros
Vlinderhof, Utrecht, Netherlands
Piet Oudolf's Planting Style – How does he do it? with Noel Kingsbury

FRIDAY 5 JULY £150 (10.30AM–5PM)
Forde Abbey, Dorset (15)
Working with the Meadow Aesthetic – designing and managing perennial meadows with Dr Nigel Dunnett & Joshua Sparkes

WEDNESDAY 10 JULY £140
Green and Gorgeous, Oxfordshire (7)
Growing Perennials as Cut Flowers with Rachel Siegfried

WEDNESDAY 10 JULY £25.00 6.30PM ▦
Sheffield Botanical Gardens, Yorkshire (5)
Film screening of 'Five Seasons – The gardens of Piet Oudolf'

THURSDAY 11 JULY £130 ▦
Sheffield Botanical Gardens, Yorkshire (5)
Sketch with Confidence – developing drawing skills for garden designers with Liz Ackerley

TUESDAY 23 JULY £140 ▦
Scampston Walled Garden, Yorkshire (3)
Plants for a Purpose – right plant, right place with Rosy Hardy

WEDNESDAY 21 AUGUST £130 ▦
Whitburgh House, Midlothian (22)
Planting Design and Contemporary Art with Elliott Forsyth

MONDAY 2 SEPTEMBER £140
Bury Court, Hampshire (13)
A Collaborative Approach to Design and Planting with Charlotte Harris and Hugo Bugg

MONDAY 9 SEPTEMBER £140
Parham House and Gardens, West Sussex (16)
The Plantsman's Year – a guide to seasonal interest in the garden, along with a propagation workshop with Tom Brown & Marina Christopher

TUESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER £140 ▦
East Ruston Old Vicarage Gardens, Norfolk (11)
Designing with Colour with Nick Bailey

TUESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER £140
Stillingfleet Lodge, Yorkshire (4)
Lose your Fear of Pruning with Timothy Walker

WEDNESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER £140
Borde Hill, Surrey (23)
The Rabbit's Eye View – learning about long-term plant performance with Noel Kingsbury

THURSDAY 12 SEPTEMBER £140
Wildegoose Nursery, Shropshire (21)
Gardens through the Lens – a photography workshop with Jason Ingram

FRIDAY 13 SEPTEMBER £140
Arvensis Perennials, Wiltshire (20)
Planting Design for the Public Realm – creating resilient and characterful planting for urban, public spaces with Giacomo Guzzon & Ton Muller

TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER £140
Great Dixter, East Sussex (24)
The Rabbit's Eye View – learning about long-term plant performance with Noel Kingsbury and Fergus Garrett

WEDNESDAY 25 SEPTEMBER £140 (11AM–6PM)
Yeo Valley Organic Gardens, Somerset (14)
The Ultimate Kitchen Garden with Mark Diacono & Lia Leendertz

MONDAY 30 SEPTEMBER £160
Iford Manor Gardens, Wiltshire (12)
Creative Containers for Seasonal Impact with Troy Scott-Smith

WEDNESDAY 2 OCTOBER £130
Alixtex, Torberry Farm, Hampshire (25)
Growing Under Glass – edible and ornamentals with Sarah Wain

THURSDAY 3 OCTOBER £140
Wildegoose Nursery, Shropshire (21)
The Rabbit's Eye View – learning about long-term plant performance with Noel Kingsbury

THURSDAY 10 OCTOBER £140 (10.30AM–5PM)
Forde Abbey, Dorset (15)
Garden Evolution – a design workshop with Joshua Sparkes & Annie Guilfoyle

FRIDAY 11 OCTOBER £150
Horniman Museum, London (18)
Using Grasses and Perennials in the Modern Garden with Neil Lucas

MONDAY 14 OCTOBER £150
Beningbrough Hall Gallery & Gardens, Yorkshire (19) Contemporary Gardens in an Historic Setting – a design workshop with Andy Sturgeon

THURSDAY 17 OCTOBER £140
Adderstone House, Northumberland (2)
Developing the Garden Narrative – a garden design workshop with Annie Guilfoyle and Sean Murray

FRIDAY 18 OCTOBER £45 6.30PM
Hospitalfield, Arbroath (1)
Supper and film screening of 'Five Seasons – The gardens of Piet Oudolf'

SATURDAY 19 OCTOBER £150
Hospitalfield, Arbroath (1)
Beauty and Biodiversity, Water and Well-Being: Integrating Art and Ecology for Sustainable Gardens with Dr Nigel Dunnett

For booking and details of all workshops go to
gardenmasterclass.org
or email gardenmasterclass@gmail.com

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KITTED OUT

For growing houseplants

COMPILED BY ALYS HURN

MAIN IMAGE (THIS PAGE AND OVERLEAF) BY STEVE SAYERS

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1. Pocket Trowel Multi Tool, £22, 020 7059 0915, easternbiological.co.uk **2. Arno Trellis (set of 8 metal rings),** £69.52, 020 7692 4001, madeindesign.co.uk **3. Baby Bio Houseplant Food,** £2.99, widely available **4. Hozelock Aquasolo Holiday Watering Cone,** £5.95 each, 0345 077 8888, homebase.co.uk **5. Socker Greenhouse,** £12, 020 3645 0000, ikea.com **6. Jan Constantine Tropical Palm Cushion in black and cream,** £98 each, 01270 821194, janconstantine.com

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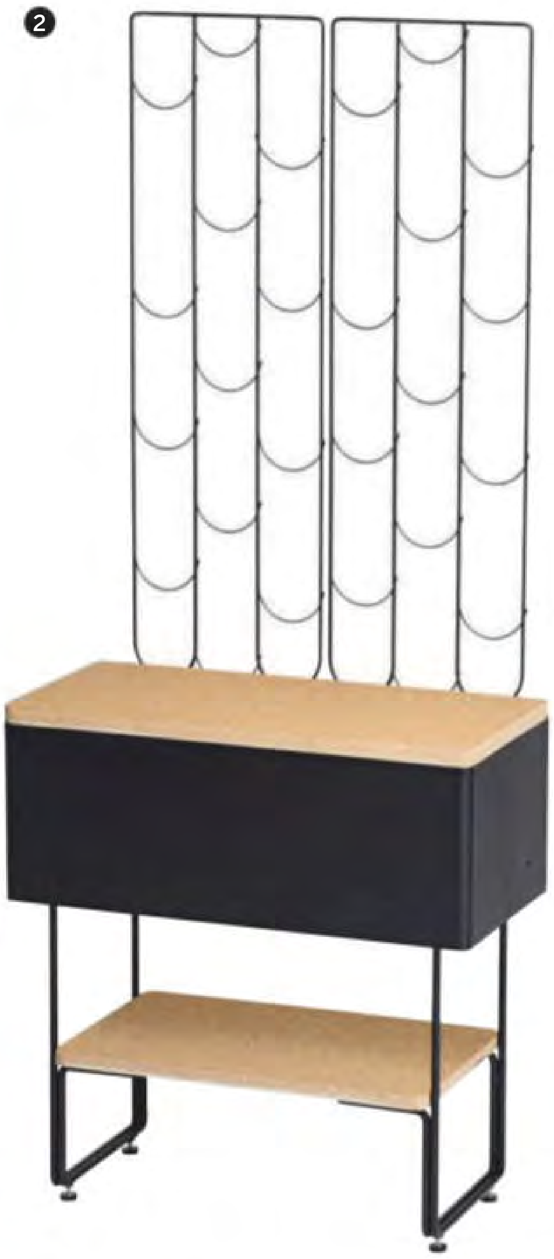

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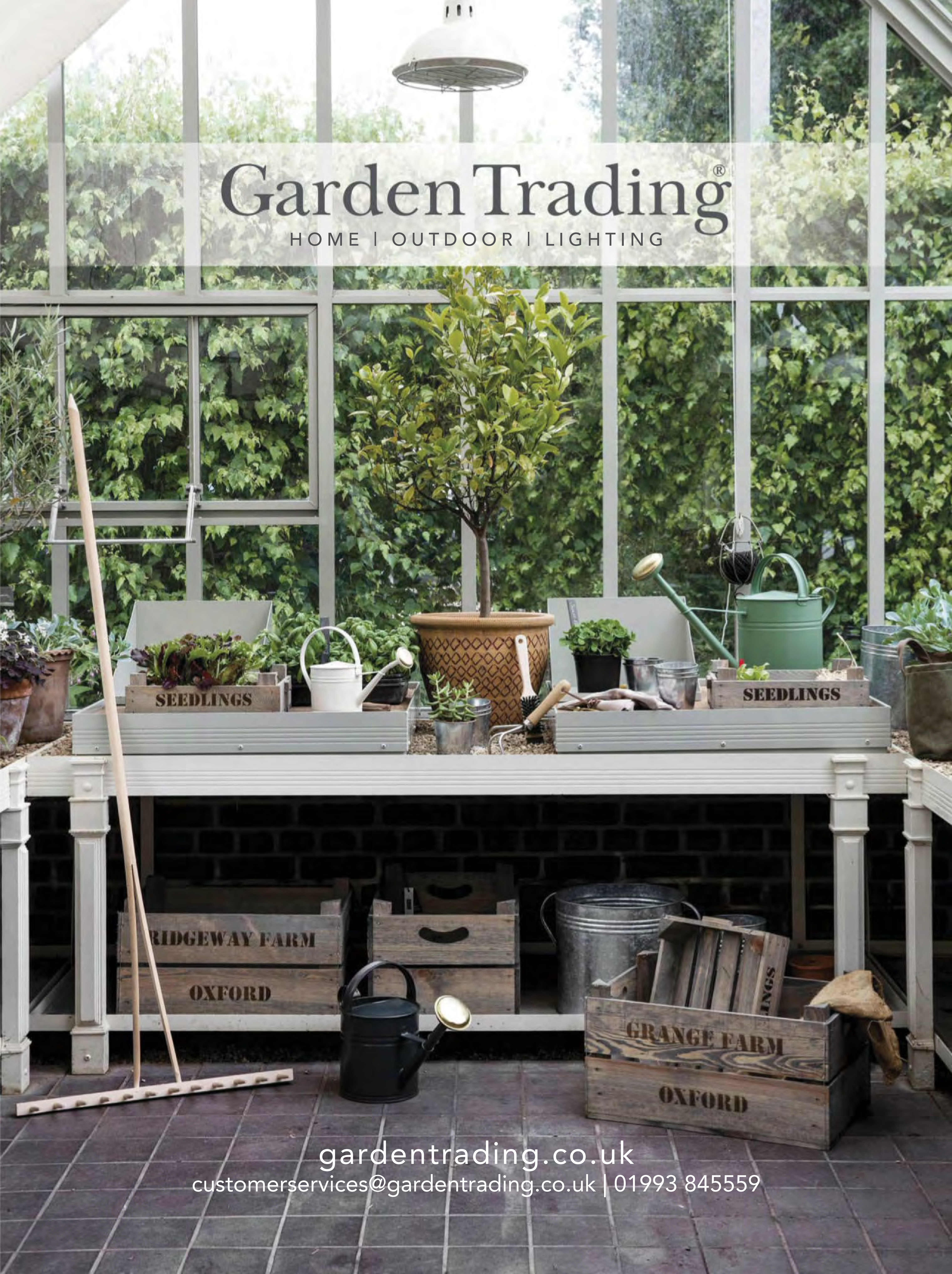
1. Enamelled Geo Plant Tray, £26.99 (large), £15.99 (small), 01344 578811, waitrosegarden.com **2. Kekkilä Planter Box,** £168, and **Kekkilä Plant Supports Laine**, £36.45 each, +358 20 743 2530, finnishdesignshop.com **3. Houseplant Pruners,** £9.99, 0114 233 8262, burgonandball.com **4. Helix Shelving in white marble (H160cm),** £399, 020 3319 6332, swooneditions.com **5. Small Hand-Embroidered Cactus Pin,** €18, +33 (0)9 80 74 11 53, maconetlesquoy.com **6. Vitax Gravel,** 01530 510060, vitaxgrower.co.uk for stockists **7. Houseplant and Terrarium Tool Set,** £9.99, 0114 233 8262, burgonandball.com

Turn to page 114 for our new column on houseplants.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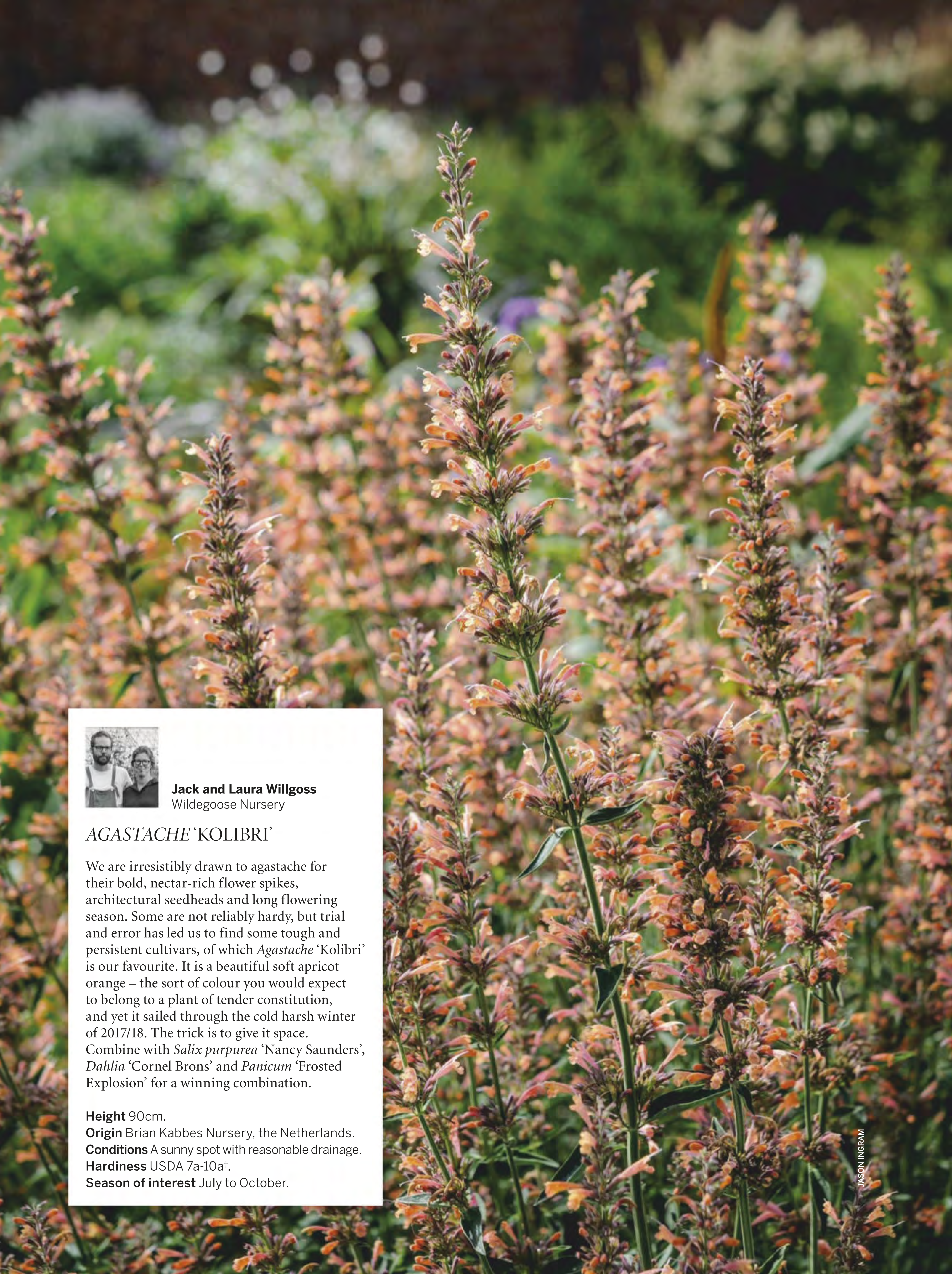


JASON INGRAM

Jack and Laura Willgoss
Wildegoose Nursery

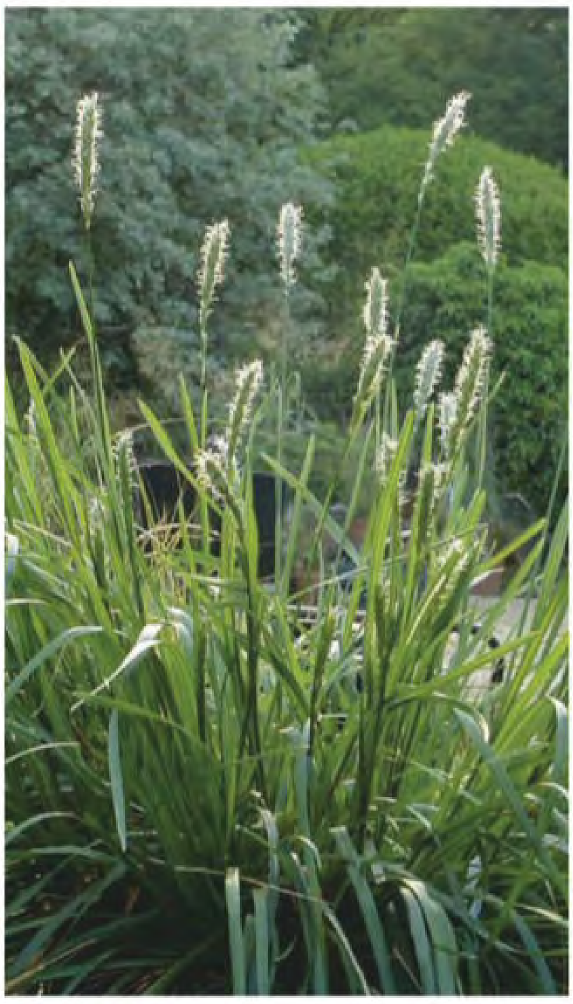
AGASTACHE 'KOLIBRI'

We are irresistibly drawn to agastache for their bold, nectar-rich flower spikes, architectural seedheads and long flowering season. Some are not reliably hardy, but trial and error has led us to find some tough and persistent cultivars, of which *Agastache* 'Kolibri' is our favourite. It is a beautiful soft apricot orange – the sort of colour you would expect to belong to a plant of tender constitution, and yet it sailed through the cold harsh winter of 2017/18. The trick is to give it space. Combine with *Salix purpurea* 'Nancy Saunders', *Dahlia* 'Cornel Brons' and *Panicum* 'Frosted Explosion' for a winning combination.

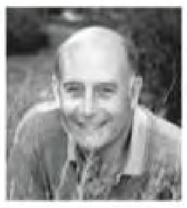
Height 90cm.
Origin Brian Kabbes Nursery, the Netherlands.
Conditions A sunny spot with reasonable drainage.
Hardiness USDA 7a-10a†.
Season of interest July to October.

INSIDER CHOICE

We asked the experts which plants they are most excited about growing in their gardens in 2019



KNOLL GARDENS



Neil Lucas
Knoll Gardens

SESLERIA 'GREENLEE'

A hybrid of *S. autumnalis* and *S. caerulea,* 'Greenlee' has bright-green foliage with a long season of interest that sets off almost perfectly the delicate white flowers that are freely produced during summer. Attractive on its own, it also works beautifully as a background or matrix grass and a foil for many other perennials and even taller grasses. Semi-evergreen, but usually best cut back in early spring.

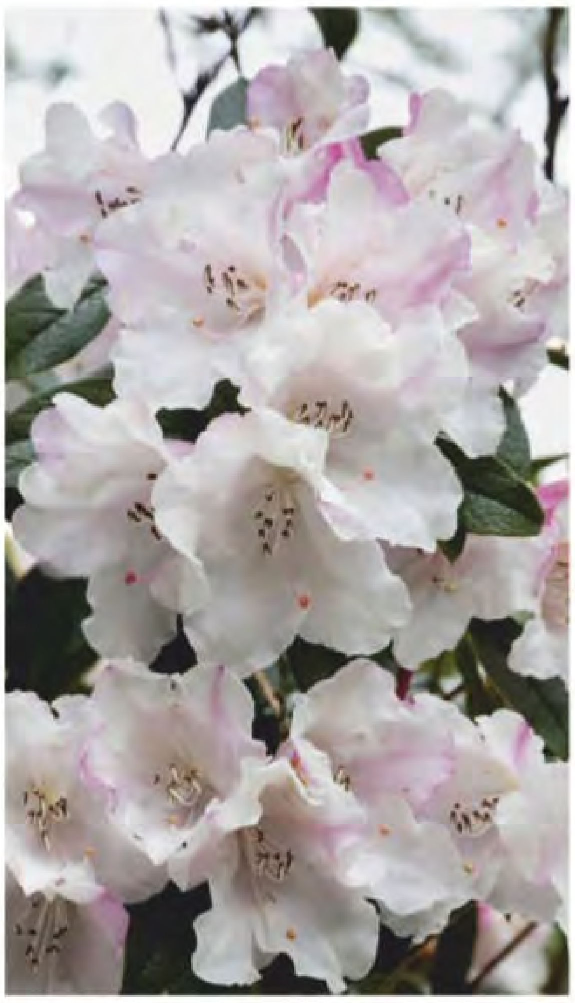
Height 30-40cm.
Origin Garden hybrid (European parents).
Conditions Best in a sunny, open spot.
Hardiness RHS H7.
Season of interest April to January.

Bridget Elworthy and Henrietta Courtauld
The Land Gardeners

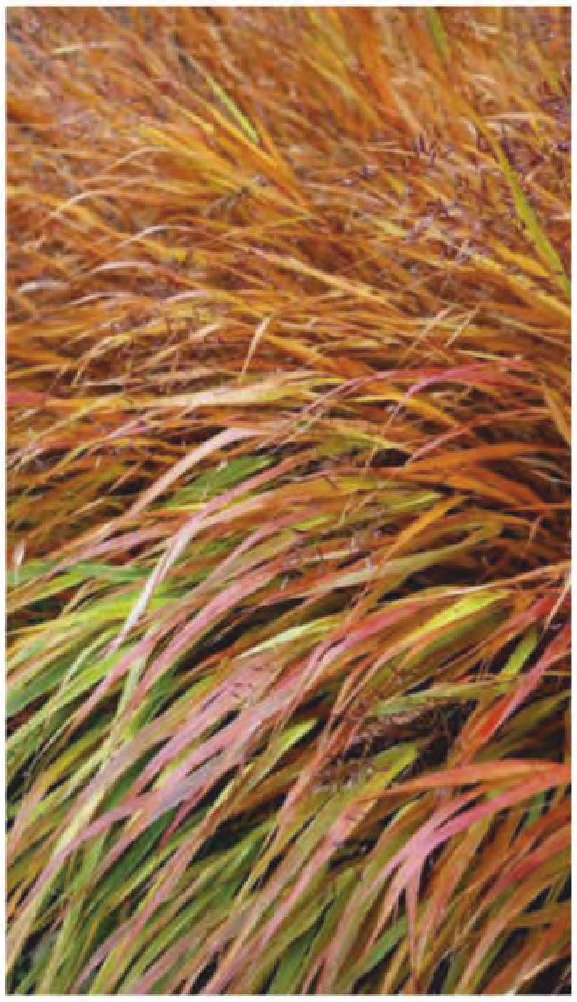
RHODODENDRON 'FRAGRANTISSIMUM'

In spring, we bring this plant inside in pots, filling the house with its fragrance of beeswax candles, wood polish and lilies. Carmine buds open to frilly white flowers with rose-pink throats. We have been propagating softwood cuttings for several years, and this year plan to grow them in a sheltered spot in the garden. AGM*.

Height 90cm-1.5m.
Origin Garden origin (Asian parents).
Conditions Acid, lime-free soil with even moisture. Shelter from strong winds.
Hardiness RHS H3.
Season of interest March to May.



JOHN RICHMOND / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



REX MAY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

MARIANNE MAJERUS

Sean Walter
The Plant Specialist

HAKONECHLOA MACRA 'NICOLAS'

A relatively new form of this caespitose grass that is becoming more freely available. It resembles green *H. macra* in early spring but soon develops russet colouring to leaf margins and whole leaves in a natural way, intensifying by autumn. Ideal for softening path and border edges in groups or singly.

Height 35cm.
Origin Garden origin (species east Asia).
Conditions Sun or light shade. Most soils except sun-baked, dry conditions.
Hardiness USDA 5a-9b.
Season of interest Spring to autumn.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. Hardiness ratings given where available.

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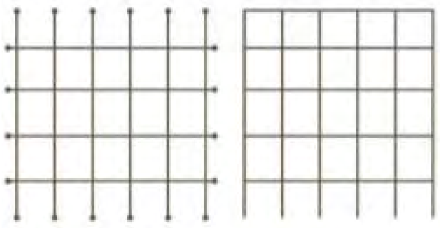

Munton's 12mm steel **Trellises** are made to measure to any length and height, with any number of poles so that they fit your garden space exactly; either wall- or ground-mounted and welded into large permanent grids.

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GARDENING FOR BEGINNERS

Wednesday & Thursday 24/25 April and 1/2 May ***BOOKING NOW***

One of our most popular courses, now led by master horticulturalist Ben Pope, which aims to take each student through all the practical elements of caring for a garden from soil, tools, maintenance, seed sowing and propagating, weed control and pests and diseases. The first three days will be spent at the Chelsea Physic Garden and the final day will be spent gaining practical experience in Rosemary Alexander's much praised garden near Petersfield and the garden nearby, where Ben is in charge. Participants will be given a chance to prune, plant, sow seeds and regular maintenance tasks will be discussed. A light lunch and refreshments will be provided daily.

ONE YEAR GOOD GARDENING DIPLOMA

September 2019 – early July 2020

Covers the best in planting design while training in the more serious aspects of horticultural techniques. Practical sessions held at an exclusive garden under the guidance of an esteemed head gardener and lectures by many leading gardening personalities. Regular visits to outstanding private gardens.
(1 day a week (Tues), 10.30am–3.15pm, over three 10 week terms)

THE ESSENTIAL GARDEN DESIGN DIPLOMA

January – March 2020

Based at the Chelsea Physic Garden and led by Rosemary Alexander. This course covers all the elements needed to design an average garden. Taking students step by step through site surveying, using the grid, horizontal and vertical features, garden layout and planting plans, costing and specification, plus tuition and homework on design and planting portfolios. Tutors are well respected in the industry and will guide students through making a success of this diverse profession.
(2 days a week (Wed & Thu), 10.30am–3.15pm, plus 2 days homework)

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(1-3 years to complete and individual assessment)

Garden of Medicinal Plants – Chelsea Physic Garden Photo: R Alexander

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Long established as the leader in all design and gardening tuition and based at the unique and historic Chelsea Physic Garden

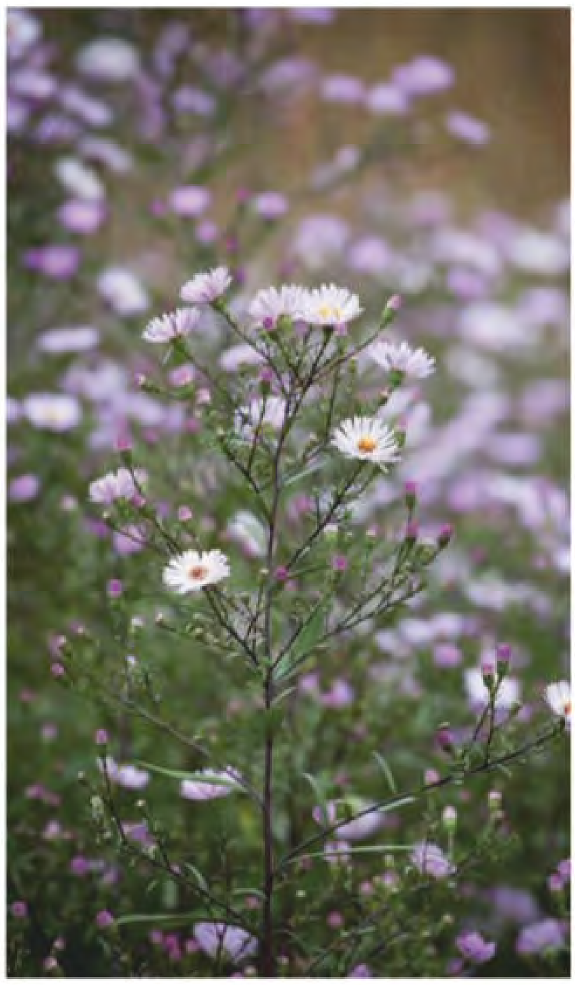
CLIVE NICHOLS

Claire Austin
Claire Austin Hardy Plants

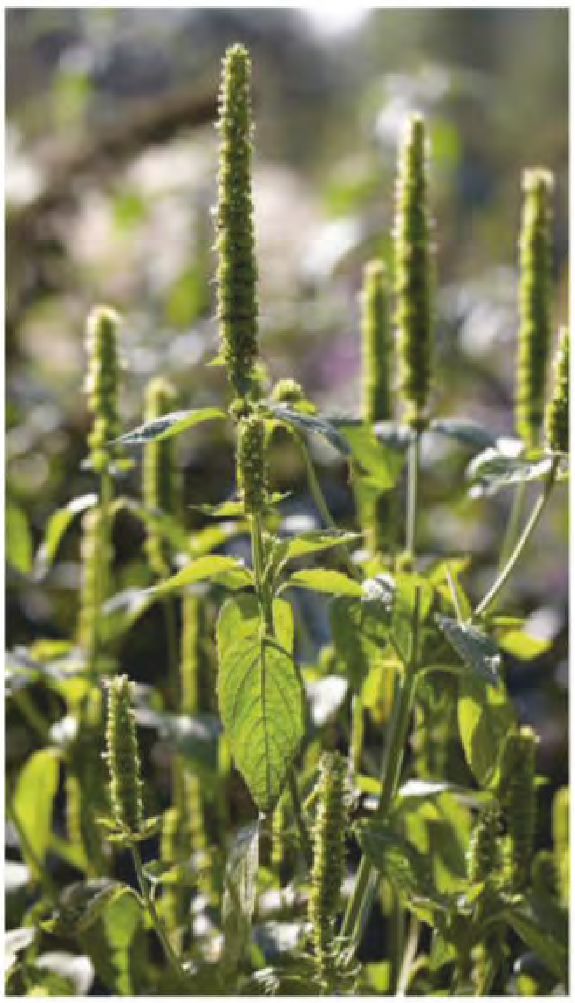
SYMPHYOTRICHUM 'VASTERIVAL'

Each autumn as the flowers open I am captivated by this aster's delicate, airy dominance. Its tall, well-branched, black stems bear slim, dark leaves. In late August small, lilac-pink flowers open into glowing sprays. As one flower fades to almost white, the next opens, giving the plant a three-dimensional quality unusual in asters. May need staking.

Height 90cm.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Any well-drained soil, in sun.
Hardiness USDA 4a-8b.
Season of interest August to September.



JONATHAN BUCKLEY / GAP PHOTOS



VISIONS / GAP PHOTOS

Robert and Gussy Macdougall
Arvensis Perennials

AGASTACHE NEPETOIDES

This towering plant, rather unshowy in the summer, is truly magnificent in autumn – dark, striking candelabras are held aloft by a glowing skeleton of strong, lime-yellow stems. Easily grown and raised from seed (it will flower in the first year), this is a short-lived perennial loved by bees.

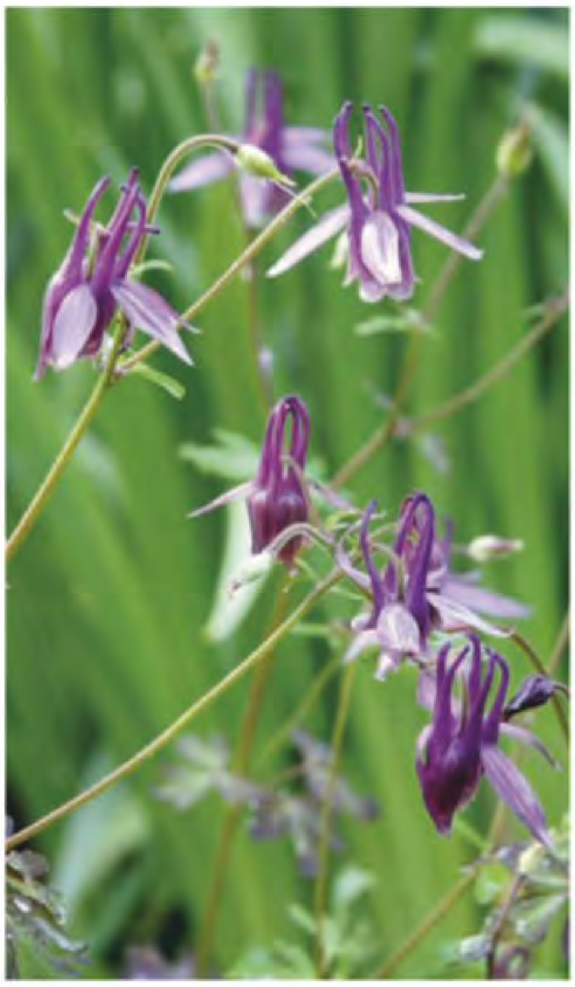
Height 2m.
Origin North America.
Conditions Full sun and well-drained soil.
Hardiness USDA 2a-8b.
Season of interest Late summer into winter.

Monica Wylie (planting designer)
Kevock Garden Plants

AQUILEGIA ROCKII

This graceful columbine thrives in dappled shade, as well as being an essential component of a flowering meadow. The combination of dusky purple petals fringed by the creamy corolla means it mingles perfectly with a wide range of plants including primulas, irises and paeonias in shades of lilac, lemon and pink.

Height 40cm.
Origin Western China.
Conditions Partial shade, any good soil.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.
Season of interest Flowers late spring to early summer.



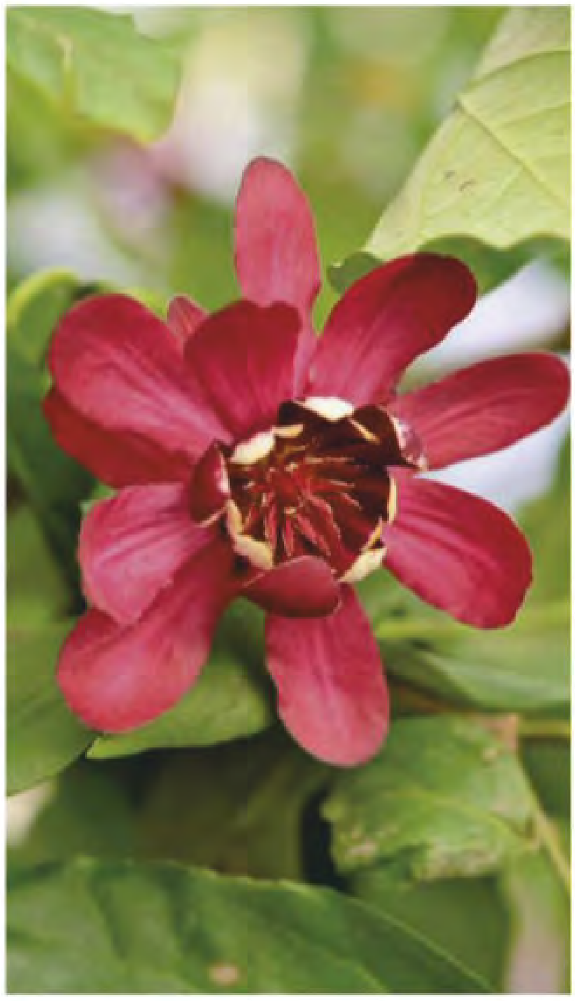
MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / GARDEN WORLD IMAGES

FURTHER DETAILS

How to find the plants chosen by our plantspeople – and more about their work

If you would like to grow any of these recommended plants, many of our chosen plantspeople are also nursery owners, with whom you can enquire about plant availability. Alternatively, check which other nurseries have stock in the annual publication *RHS Plant Finder,* or via the website apps.rhs.org.uk/horticulturaldatabase/index.asp

- **Wildegoose Nursery** Kew-trained Jack and Laura Willgoss set up Wildegoose Nursery in 2011, having taken on what was then Bouts Violas. Alongside an array of violas, they also sell home-propagated, hardy perennials. The Walled Garden, Lower Millichope, Munslow, Shropshire SY7 9HE. Tel 01584 841890, wildegoosenursery.co.uk
- **Knoll Gardens** is headed by Neil Lucas, the UK's leading authority on ornamental grasses. As well as the nursery, there's an inspirational four-acre show garden. Stapehill Road, Hampreston, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 7ND. Tel 01202 873931, knollgardens.co.uk
- Friends Bridget Elworthy and Henrietta Courtauld set up **The Land Gardeners** to get a better understanding of plant and soil health as experienced through growing, cutting and designing. They run regular workshops, as well as selling their cut flowers. The Garden and Cut Flowers, Wardington Manor, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX17 1SW. thelandgardeners.com
- **The Plant Specialist** is run by Sean Walter ▷


STEFFEN HAUSER / BOTANIKFOTO / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Mark Straver and Robin Wallace
Hortus Loci

CALYCANTHUS 'APHRODITE'

This new cultivar forms a large, multi-stemmed bush with glossy green leaves. Rich, maroon-red flowers with a light apple scent and are produced continuously from June until the first frosts. Best used as a prize specimen for a favoured spot in the garden, or at the back of a border or in woodland edge-style planting. In our view, the best shrub introduction of recent years.

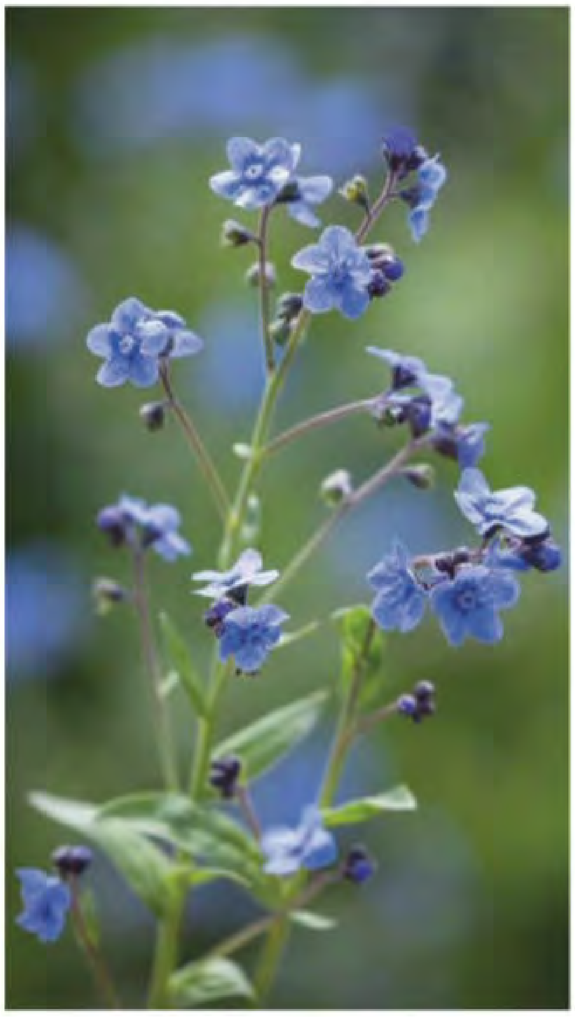
Height 3m.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Any soil; sun or partial shade.
Hardiness USDA 5a-9b.
Season of interest Summer.

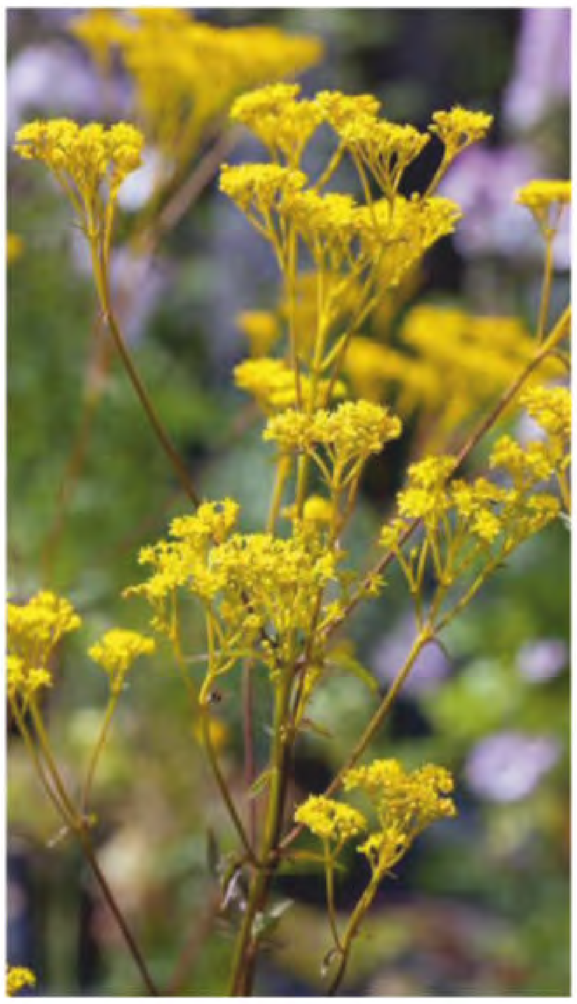
Jamie Butterworth
Butterworth Horticulture

CYNOGLOSSUM AMABILE 'FIRMAMENT'

Once seen Chinese forget-me-not is a plant you will remember. Delightful blue flowers add a zing to planting from May through to July. Could this be the next star of Chelsea? Ideal as a cut flower, or as an annual to spice up borders. I like to mix it with a fiery geum for a dazzling display.

Height 40cm.
Origin Western China, Bhutan.
Conditions Happy in most soil types; full sun or partial shade.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 6a-9b.
Season of interest May to July.


JONATHAN BUCKLEY


RACHEL WARNE

June Blake
June Blake's garden

PATRINIA SCABIOSIFOLIA

A beautiful, airy, umbellifer with tiny, clear-yellow flowers. Although it's tall, I've used it at the front of a late-summer border with *Rudbeckia lanceolata*, *Silphium perfoliatum*, *Amicia zygomeris*, yellow *Helenium* and yellow species dahlias. The horizontal plates of flowers are a stunning contrast with the other plants. No need to stake or deadhead. Can be invasive in parts of the USA.

Height 90cm-1m.
Origin Japan and Korea.
Conditions Full sun with good drainage.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.
Season of interest Late July to late September.

▷ and Keith Pounder, who ensure that all their plants make reliable garden choices. Whitefield Lane, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire HP16 0BH. Tel 01494 866650, theplantspecialist.co.uk

- **Claire Austin Hardy Perennials** has a good selection of tried and tested perennials. Visit her plant shop newly located to The Sarn, the local pub, for a unique combination of plants, food and drink. The Sarn, Sarn, Newtown, Powys SY16 4EJ. Tel 01686 670880, claireaustin-hardyplants.co.uk
- While **Arvensis** may be wholesale only, owners Robert and Gussy make expert and exciting plant choices that you can follow on their Instagram feed – arvensisperennials. Lower Wraxall, Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire BA15 2RU. Tel 01225 867761, arvensisperennials.co.uk
- **Kevock Garden Plants** is an award-winning nursery based in Scotland, offering a worldwide selection of plants. Kevock Road, Lasswade, Midlothian EH18 1HX. Tel 0131 454 0660, kevockgarden.co.uk
- **Hortus Loci** grows many of the plants for designers heading to RHS Chelsea Flower Show. It also has an excellent retail Plant Centre selling large-sized plants. Hound Green, Hook, Hampshire RG27 8LQ. Tel 0118 932 6487, hlplantcentre.co.uk
- Plantsman **Jamie Butterworth** trained at Wisley and went on to co-found YoungHort in 2013 to inspire a new generation of young gardeners. He is an RHS Ambassador and has recently set up his own practice offering planting design and installation. butterworthhorticulture.co.uk
- **June Blake** is one of Ireland's best-known plantswomen. Her three-acre garden is a fusion of inspired design and painterly planting. She also runs a small nursery. Tinode, Blessington, County Wicklow, Ireland. Tel +353 (0)87 277 0399, juneblake.ie

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

Sowing the seeds of love

When a good idea blooms into a great company, the result is something that's as pretty as a Pictorial Meadow

This is the inspirational story of how one man went to sow a meadow – and ended up establishing one of the most innovative meadow seed and meadow turf companies in the UK.

To begin, let's go back 20 years to when Professor Nigel Dunnett became involved in an intensive research programme at the University of Sheffield, the world's leading centre on naturalistic planting. The project aimed to develop meadows that could thrive in garden and urban settings, making it possible for anyone to achieve the spectacular variety a meadow offers. A new approach was born.

Today, the expertise of landscape architects, researchers, horticulturists and landscape managers is brought together under the name Pictorial Meadows, a company formed by the University of Sheffield in conjunction with social enterprise, Green Estate.

Thanks to its passion, knowledge and highly innovative products, Pictorial Meadows is now helping the nation's gardeners and landowners produce and care for beautiful displays of naturalistic planting right across the UK, and increasingly Europe.

As well as home gardeners, councils, commercial organisations and many sporting arenas now regularly buy Pictorial Meadow's products, and rely on them for sowing and maintenance advice. The company's success was sealed when its seeds were used to create a striking meadow landscape for the Olympic Park in 2012. It became a stunning example of how to create a visually exciting landscape by taking inspiration from nature – and surprised the millions of visitors who saw its bold colour. But perhaps the biggest testament of all is the company's growing number of happy customers. If you like wildflower meadows, you're going to love Pictorial Meadows.

Pictorial Meadows

TO FIND OUT MORE OR REQUEST A CATALOGUE, GO TO **PICTORIALMEADOWS.CO.UK** OR CALL **0114 267 7635**

The Outsider

Horticulturist Hannah Gardner climbs above the clouds to the volcanic heights of Tenerife in the Canary Islands, in search of Echium wildpretii, *and finds inspiration for seeds to sow at home*

WORDS HANNAH GARDNER ILLUSTRATION ALICE PATTULLO

The sheer scale of Las Cañadas del Teide, the ancient craters on Tenerife's largest volcano are impressive. At an elevation of 2,300m, the wide bowl is already high above the tree line and the sea of clouds. Snow capped from November to March, Mount Teide is the highest mountain on Spanish territory. Still active, steam belches from fumaroles at the summit. It last erupted in 1909, the historic lava flows roll down from the mountain ridges to swamp the rocky landscape below like a petrified ocean swell.

The primitive desolation of this geological landscape and huge starry night sky is enough of a reason to visit. The low, tough flora is also inspirational and outstandingly beautiful. A skeletal dried-flower garden for many months of the year, a burst of vivid colour is revealed during spring flowering. Inhaling the pure thin air, and wandering through this spacious resilient vegetation on dusty unmapped trails gives a sense of wonder, freedom and discovery.

Inspiration for the trip

Tenerife has varied and easily accessible hiking with many endemic and rare species. The pristine volcanic landscape of Teide, is just a stone's throw from the wonderfully exotic 18th-century Botanic Garden of Puerto de La Cruz, the architectural and cultural gem of La Laguna and the verdant misty vertiginous trails of the Anaga Peninsula.

When to go

For flowering plants visit April to June. Ice and snow frequently close the high northern approach during the winter when routes from the south are more straight forward.

Where to go

Snaking up through high montane forests of *Pinus canariensis* the landscape is already breathtaking, the stately pines piercing through rough, brick-red boulder fields. I noticed the violet-flowered *Nepeta teydea*, the Teide nepeta growing here. A thick layer of hairs protects its leaves, reducing evapotranspiration in these windy climes. In an inspiring natural pairing it flowers alongside clouds of the airy, neon-yellow *Descurainia bourgaeana*. Within the sandy lunar landscape of the crater the initial impression is of open space and rock mass in warm, earthy tones of red, ochre, raw umber and the uncompromising black of obsidian lava.

Distance is suddenly deceptive, you can walk anywhere, but feel you are getting nowhere. The varied 4km route around the spectacular rock formations of Roques de Garcia is a good place to start botanising. Leading across scree and lumpy lava fields, you meander back through the park's most distinctive and gravity-defying columns and pillars, and there are plenty of fascinating plants. From this high vantage point you look back across the Ucana plain and its scattered vegetative cushions. *Erysimum scoparium*, the endemic mauve Teide wallflower favours rocky crevices, while the cheery Teide margarita (*Argyranthemum tenerifae*) is tough enough to scamper up and live out on the lava fields.

The tall, translucent grass *Arrhenatherum calderae* shimmies in the sunlight but in May and June it is the conical, blood-red flowerheads of downy *Echium wildpretii* that turn heads. Standing 1.5m, high they occur infrequently in colonies. Plants that thrive here have adapted their aerial parts. A compact pillowed habit, reduced, often silvery leaves, greyish stems and thick hairs or a waxy coating on their foliage help them cope with the extreme temperatures, strong winds and lack of moisture.

Loose mounds of pretty, glaucous *Pterocephalus lasiospermus* and the distinctive hemispherical form of the sweetly scented broom *Cytisus supranubius.* dominate. The broom's dense branches create ground-anchored clouds that, viewed from a distance, look as though they have been frozen in time while scudding across the rusty expanse of the crater floor.

Plant to grow at home

January heralds a flourish of seed ordering and optimism, and for the cost of a beer *Echium wildpretii* is worth a try. A member of the borage family, it is easy to germinate. Surface sow under glass in early spring, pricking seedlings out into gritty compost in one-litre pots, then grow on. In northern Europe you are nurturing this herbaceous biennial primarily as a stunning foliage plant, chancing a glorious flower spike in the second or even third season. Plant out in full sun against a warm wall. It requires really sharp drainage and protection from winter wet, so you could always cheat and sink it in a generous pot for the summer then overwinter in a cold frame, planting out again in the second spring. If dry, it can take temperatures of -5°C. □

Guides and maps

Native Flora of the Canary Islands by Miguel Angel Cabrera Perez (Editorial Everest, 2000). A detailed account of the principal plant communities and a useful glossary.

Walk Tenerife by Jan Kostura, David Brawn and Ros Brawn (Discovery Walking Guides, 2017). Contains selection of varied, well-researched and clearly documented trails.

Where to stay

La Laguna Gran Hotel
Calle Nava y Grimón 18, San Cristóbal de La Laguna, Tenerife, Spain.
Tel +34 922 10 80 80,
lalagunagranhotel.com

A centrally located hotel that occupies a beautifully restored and extended 17th-century townhouse in the heart of historic San Cristóbal de La Laguna. The atmospheric city is a UNESCO World Heritage site that sits in the foothills of the Anaga Mountains.

Parador de Cañadas del Teide
Las Cañadas del Teide, La Orotava 38300, Tenerife, Spain.
Tel +34 922 38 64 15, parador.es

A comfortable mountain lodge with excellent restaurant in the surreal landscape of the Teide National Park.

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GARDENING TALENT

Sue Busuttil

A childhood passion for wildflowers inspired a career change for Sue, who is now herbaceous specialist at Mount St John in North Yorkshire

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Earliest gardening memory My most vivid memories are about plants in the countryside rather than the garden. I was fascinated by wildflowers from an early age and my Dad would help me look up any I didn't recognise in a much-used copy of Keble Martin's 1960s' *Concise British Flora in Colour* and then press them between tissues to put in a scrapbook.

Career change I worked as a community pharmacist for over 20 years before making my career move. For me, gardening was an interest that grew and grew out of my early love for wildflowers. In the end it became almost all consuming and I knew it was time to make the change. I love being outside, I love the chance to use my artistic side, I love the physicality of it and I love the science behind it. My only regret is that I didn't do it sooner.

Most valuable training The training I received here at Mount St John as part of the WRAG scheme (work and re-train as a gardener scheme). I had already studied for RHS qualifications but the scheme gave me the chance to gain valuable practical experience that you can't learn from a book. I was also incredibly fortunate that they offered me a full time job at the end of it.

Horticultural heroes The late Geoff Hamilton who was the gardening face of the BBC when I first got my own little piece of land and Dan Pearson and Tom Stuart-Smith for their ability to create beautiful gardens that somehow succeed in intensifying the simple beauty of nature.

Valuable tip for any gardener Mulch, mulch, mulch. This helps conserve moisture, improves your soil structure and most importantly reduces the number of weeds.

Dream plant destination I have so many dream destinations. I think The Valley of Flowers – an Indian National Park in the Western Himalayas, known for its meadows of alpine flowers and the variety of flora. I would love to trek there one day.

Unsung hero of the plant world Hardy geraniums. I think they're often considered run-of-the-mill plants but there is one for just about every garden situation: sun or shade, damp or dry.

Favourite gardening books *The Well-Tended Perennial Garden* by Tracy DiSabato-Aust is my bible for herbaceous perennial pruning and maintenance.

Contact sue@born2run.force9.co.uk. WRAG scheme: wfga.org.uk

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INSIDER CHOICE

SLOW DESIGN

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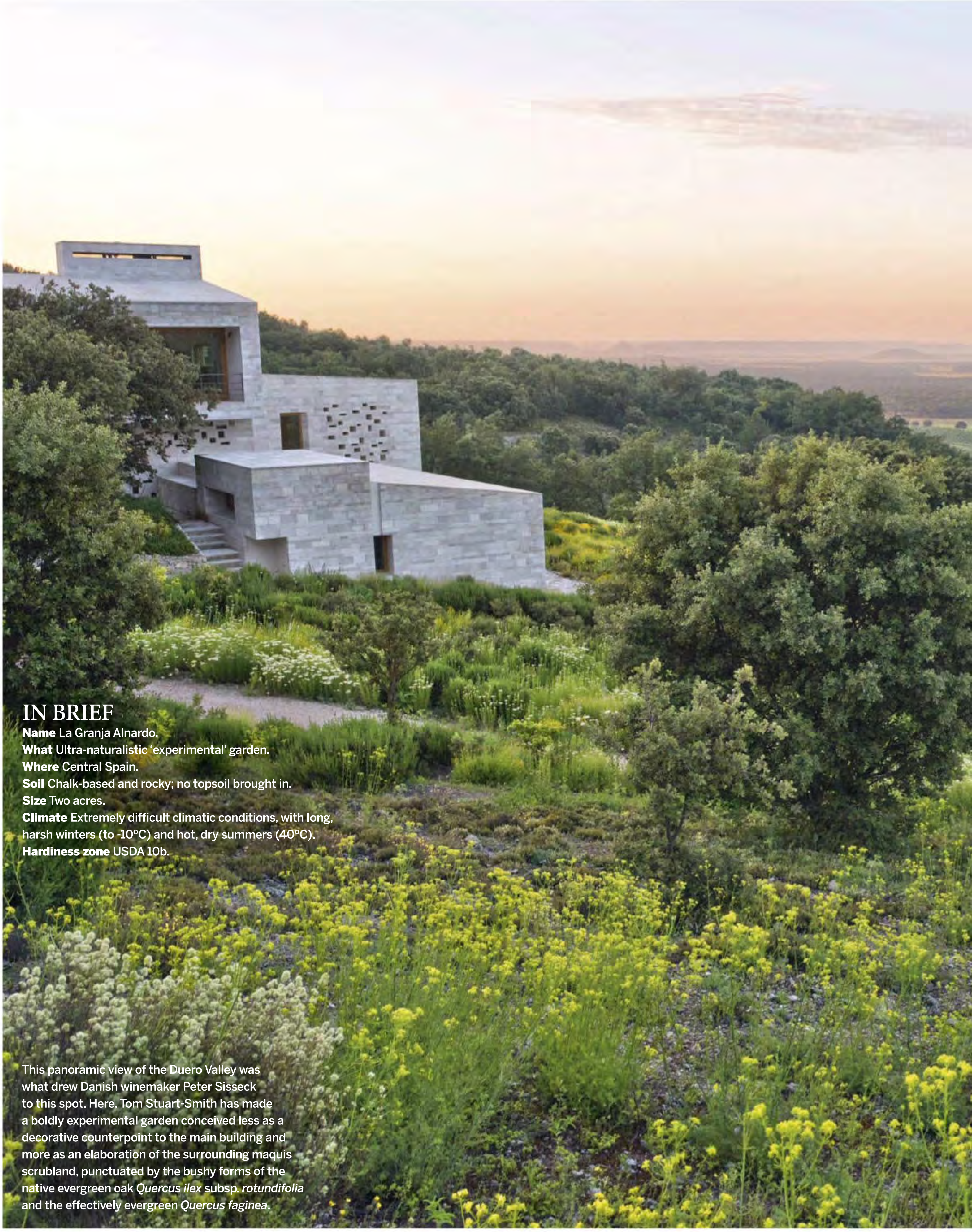
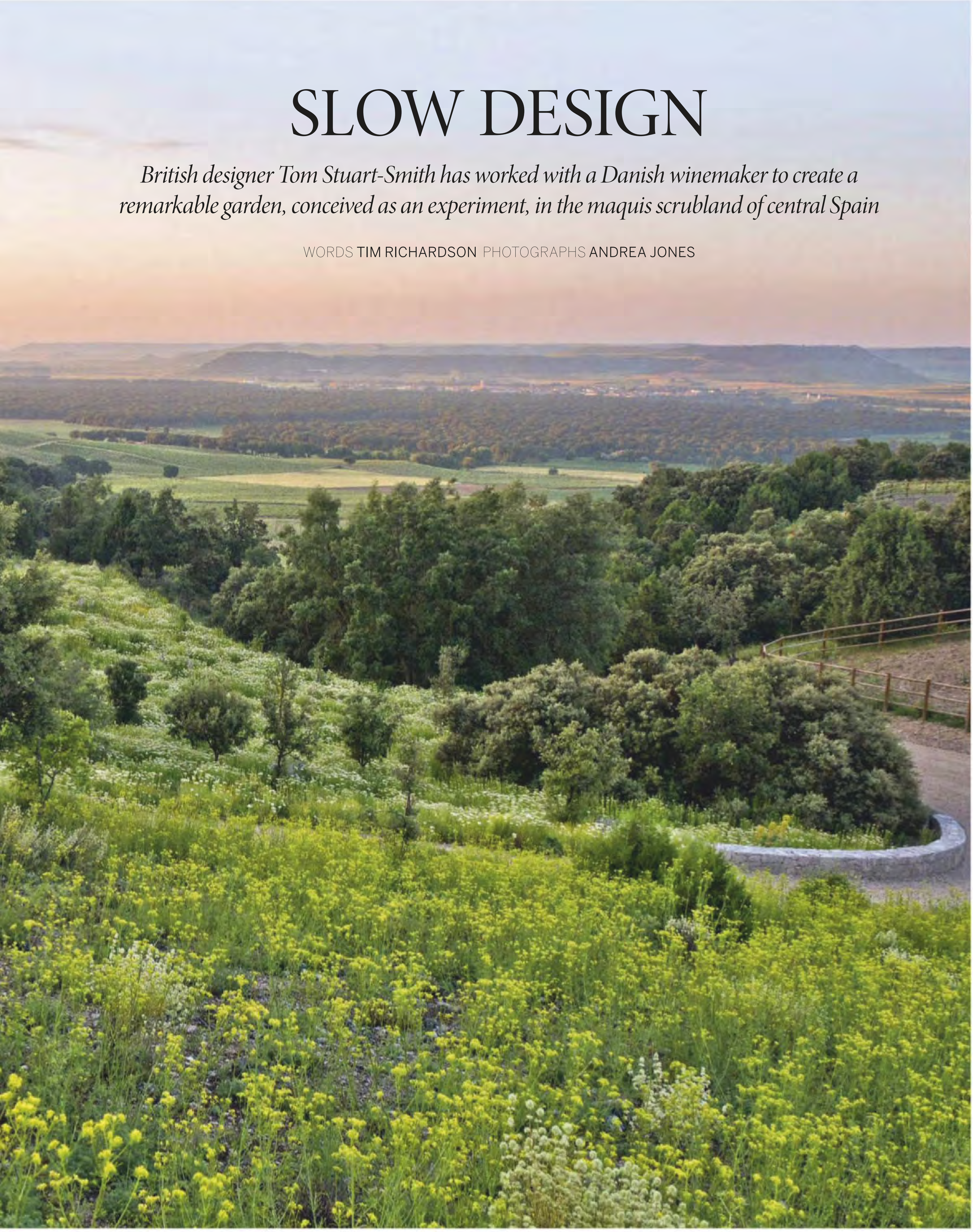


IN BRIEF

Name La Granja Alnardo.
What Ultra-naturalistic 'experimental' garden.
Where Central Spain.
Soil Chalk-based and rocky; no topsoil brought in.
Size Two acres.
Climate Extremely difficult climatic conditions, with long, harsh winters (to -10°C) and hot, dry summers (40°C).
Hardiness zone USDA 10b.

This panoramic view of the Duero Valley was what drew Danish winemaker Peter Sisseck to this spot. Here, Tom Stuart-Smith has made a boldly experimental garden conceived less as a decorative counterpoint to the main building and more as an elaboration of the surrounding maquis scrubland, punctuated by the bushy forms of the native evergreen oak *Quercus ilex* subsp. *rotundifolia* and the effectively evergreen *Quercus faginea*.



SLOW DESIGN

British designer Tom Stuart-Smith has worked with a Danish winemaker to create a remarkable garden, conceived as an experiment, in the maquis scrubland of central Spain

WORDS TIM RICHARDSON PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREA JONES

NOWHERE HAVE I FELT MORE STRONGLY THAT WHAT I AM DOING AS A DESIGNER IS SETTING A PROCESS IN MOTION

The chalky soil of the Ribiera del Duero in central Spain is renowned for the minerality it imparts to the wine that is produced here. The area is less celebrated for its suitability for gardening, as the long winters can be harsh and the even longer summers punishingly hot and dry on the open slopes of the Duero Valley. Spring and autumn barely feature. But for designer Tom Stuart-Smith and his client, Danish winemaker Peter Sisseck, the unpropitious environment has proven to be an invitation for a horticultural experiment that has been as rewarding as it has been challenging, with a result as unusual as it is beguiling.

On the southern slopes of the valley is La Granja Alnardo, an HQ for Peter's vineyards a visitor centre that doubles as a place to stay when he and his wife are in the area. Helping to knit the property together is the two-acre garden initiated by Tom and maintained by Peter and one gardener. The plot extends around the stone-clad Modernist main building and tumbles down the rocky hillside towards the farm, nominally extending uphill through scrubby maquis towards the valley ridge.

The main area of garden ranges across a wide area of the slope below the building, extending along a terraced walkway towards a pool and gym building. The native plant community on the open scrubland of these steep valley sides consists of the evergreen oak *Quercus ilex* subsp. *rotundifolia*, *Juniperus thurifera*, santolina and a prickly genista growing on the gypsum-rich material that passes for soil. This narrow range of plants has been augmented by other – mostly native – plants, some of which, including cistus and rosemary, are not particularly common locally but have taken to the environment well, and are spreading beyond the confines of the 'garden' area around the property. At first sight, Tom's plantings appear extremely naturalistic; it is only on reaching the edges of the horticulturally maintained area that the intensification and variation becomes apparent.

Tom and Peter pick their way through the planted areas, identifying those plants that have thrived in this climate and those that have performed less well. There have been large numbers of the latter, but that was always part of the understanding between designer and client: "Nowhere have I felt more strongly that what I am doing as a designer is setting a process in motion," says Tom. He came up with a matrix planting plan with the rhythmic intensity that characterises his style, dependent on key native plants such as *Santolina chamaecyparissus* and *S. rosmarinifolia*, *Geranium sanguineum*, *Helichrysum italicum*, *Dorycnium pentaphyllum*, *Cistus albidus* and *Euphorbia characias*, as well as maquis herbs such as rosemary and hyssop. Tom did not make conventional planting plans but used colourful plans like a Damien Hirst spot painting to describe the planting pattern. A wide range of other plants play a supporting role, many sourced from specialist French nurseryman Olivier Filippi, who helped with the selection. Among those from Filippi's stock that are now performing well are species of phlomis, thyme, perovskia, salvia, euphorbia and achillea, the latter making a spectacular summer show. Tom says Filippi's plants fare better than most because (like Marina Christopher) he grows them in soil as opposed to peat-based compost, which lessens the shock when they are planted out. But the challenge remains considerable: finding plants tolerant of lime, extreme cold and drought. There have been many casualties.

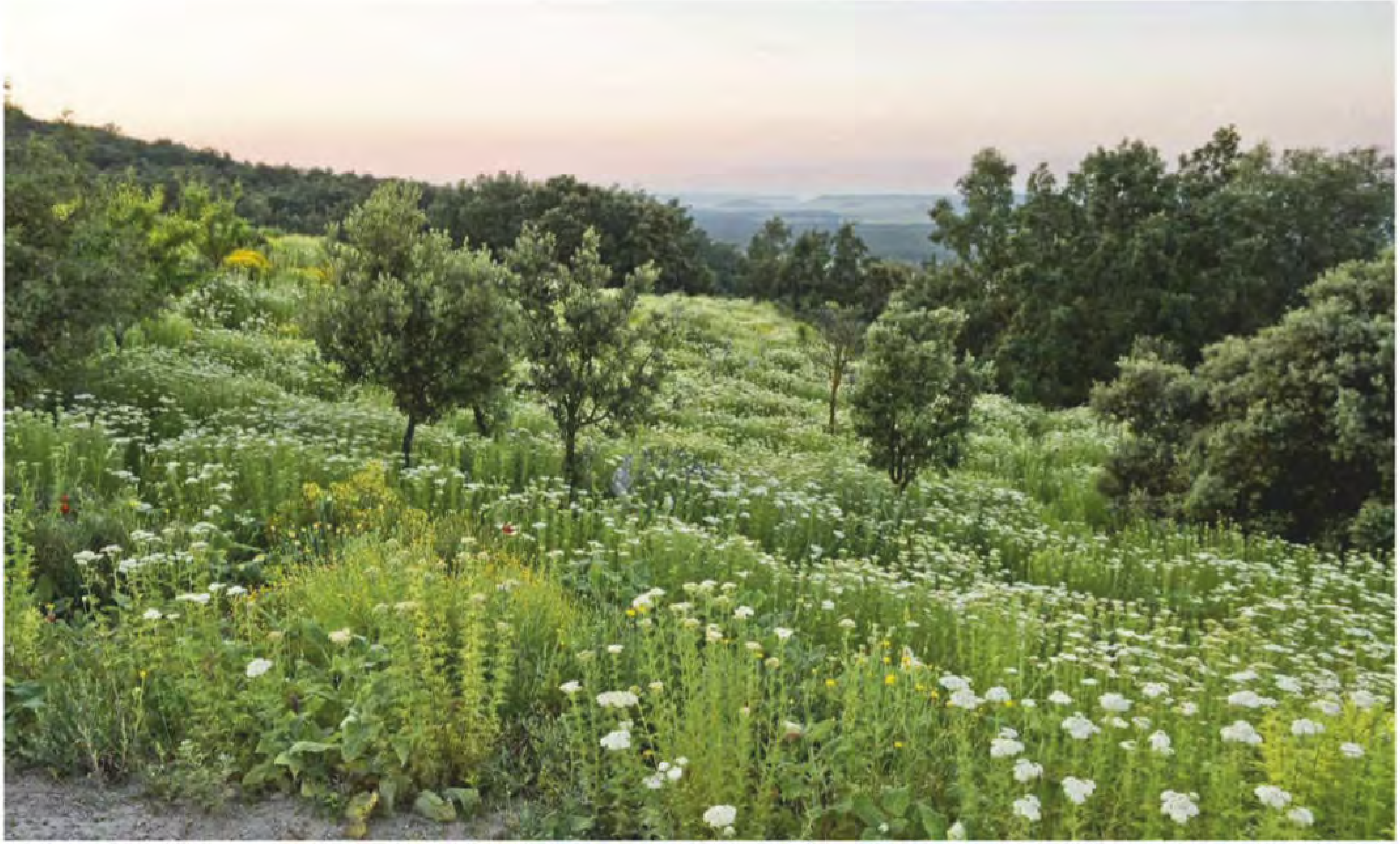
Tom and Peter knew that trial and error would be a decisive factor, and the rocky, open site did prove too much for a disconcertingly large proportion of the 2016 test planting of 40 species (ten specimens of each). Seven thousand plants were laid out the following year and it has been salutary to see how many have succumbed, and to accept the slow growth of many of the survivors. But the plants that have thrived – notably the achillea, phlomis, rosemary, dianthus, euphorbia, thymes, *Geranium sanguineum*, anthemis, phillyrea and cistus – have formed a hummocky, shrub-dominated plant community that acts as a visual continuation of the wider landscape. There have also been some unplanned bonuses, such as the erect native grass *Stipa barbata*, which thrives on the slopes. The original planting was oversown with perennial and biennial seed, in consultation with 'pictorial meadow' designer Nigel Dunnett, and it is from this layer that the achillea and anthemis derived, though Tom anticipates that their presence will lessen over time.

This experimental approach is unique in Tom's portfolio and pushes the boundaries of what we think of as a garden. "This is the only project I've done where I haven't made a bird's-eye [speculative] drawing of how it will eventually look." It is clear that Tom and his client do not know quite how the garden will turn out. One senses that they both find this rather exciting.

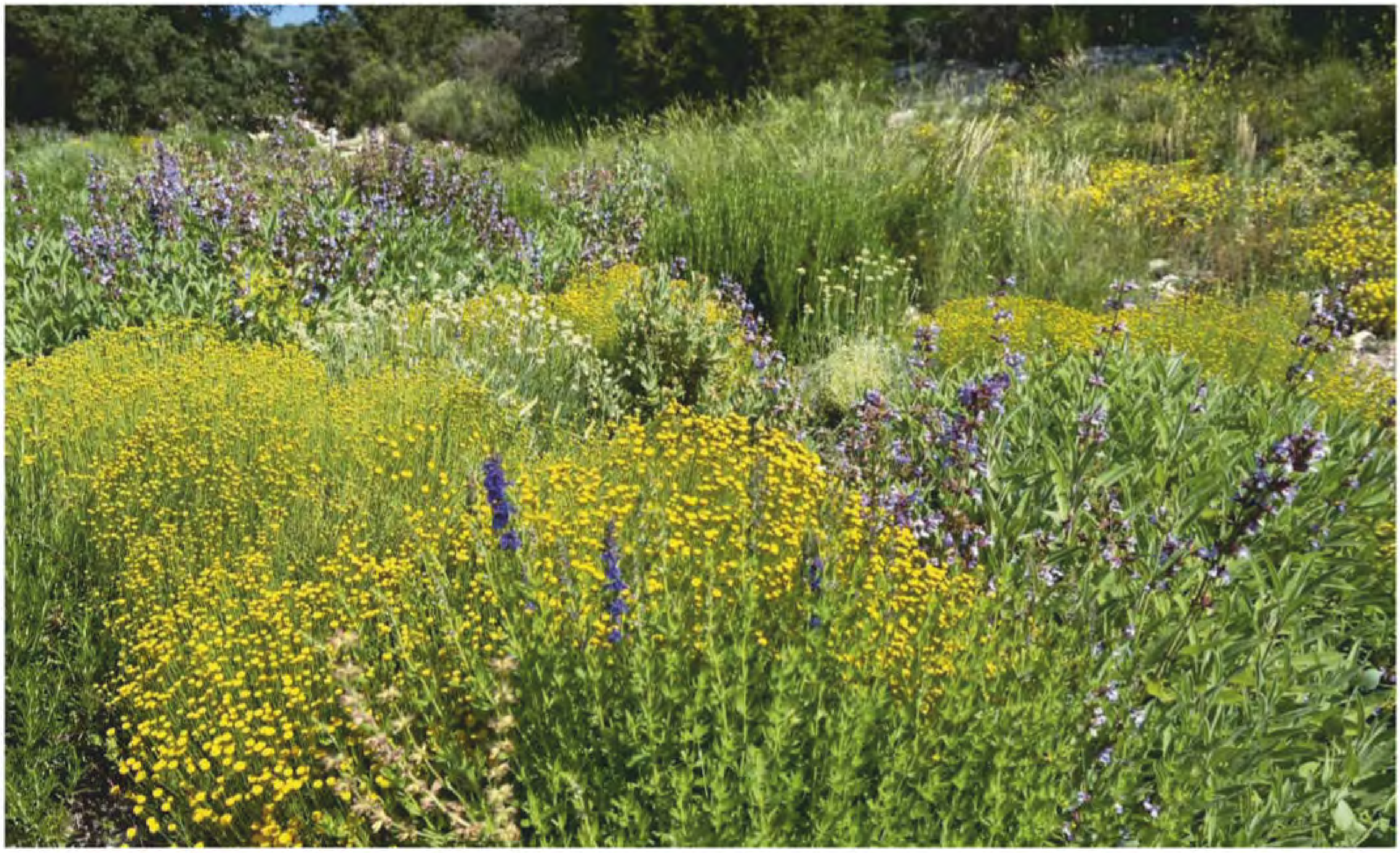
USEFUL INFORMATION

Turn the page for more of Tom's experimental planting combinations

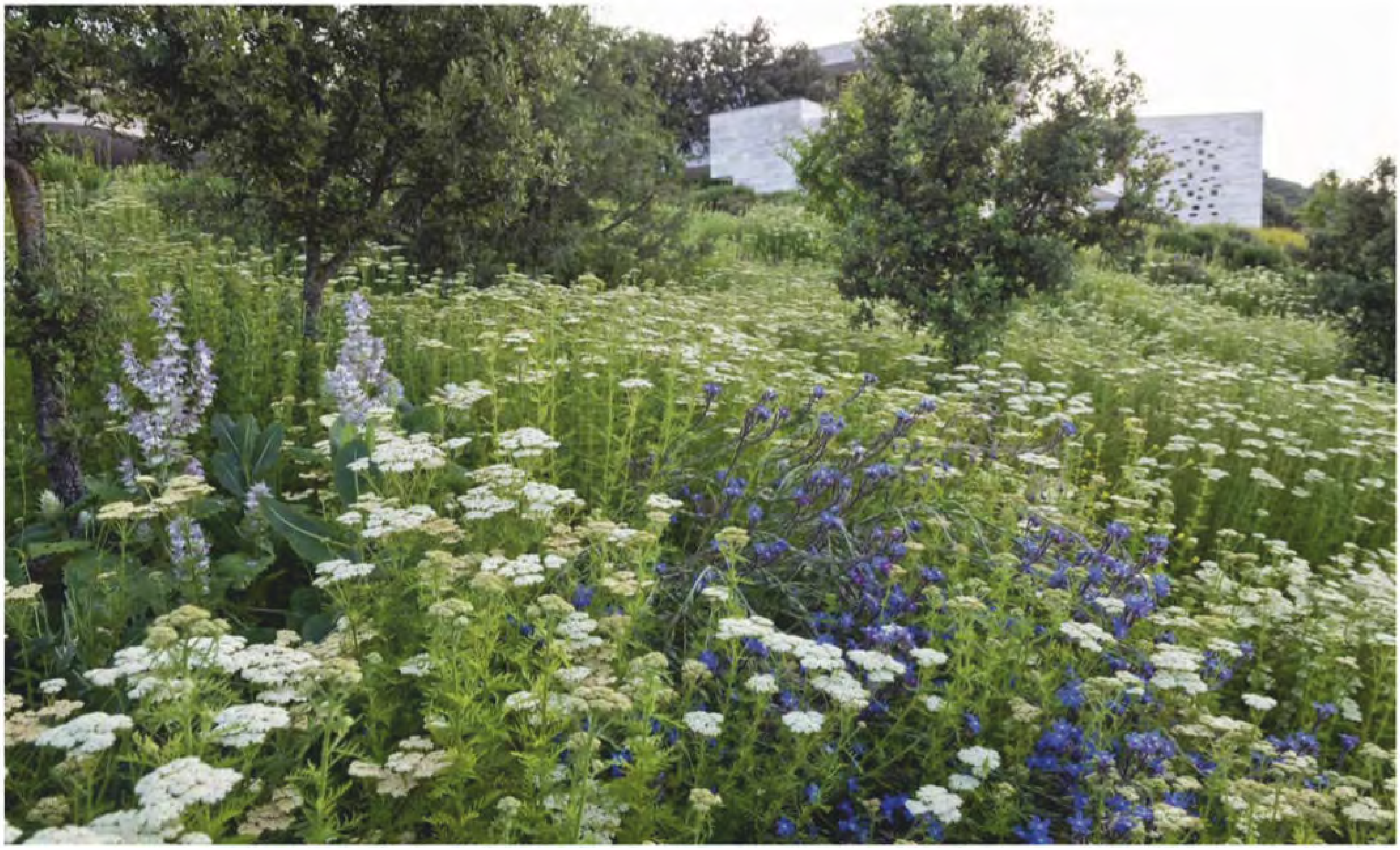
Right Santolina, rosemary and *Achillea tomentosa* dominate the vegetation around the building, their rounded forms complementing its angularity. These plants thrive on the poor, chalky soil, and can survive extreme heat and cold.



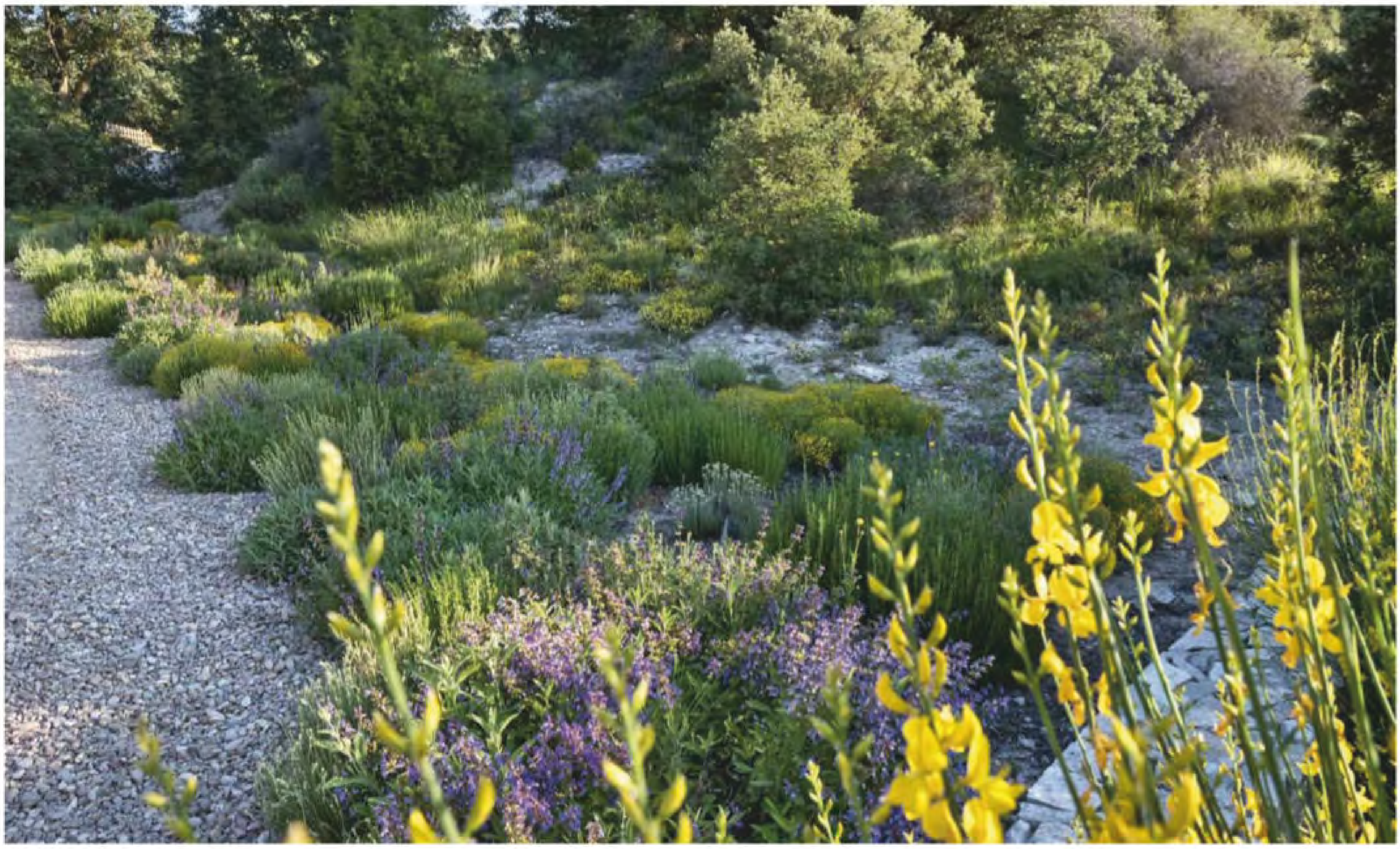
The main garden area is on the hillside below the building, separated from Peter's biodynamic farm below by a shelter belt of evergreen oak. *Achillea nobilis* has been a dominant feature in the planting design thus far, but is gradually being reduced as the larger shrubs, including *Euphorbia characias* and *Cistus albida*, become established. The achillea also provides some shade and shelter for other young plants – many things grow slowly here. The intention is that the landscape is very low maintenance and becomes to a great extent self-sustaining. The planting plan is "broadly indicative rather than prescriptive," says Tom.



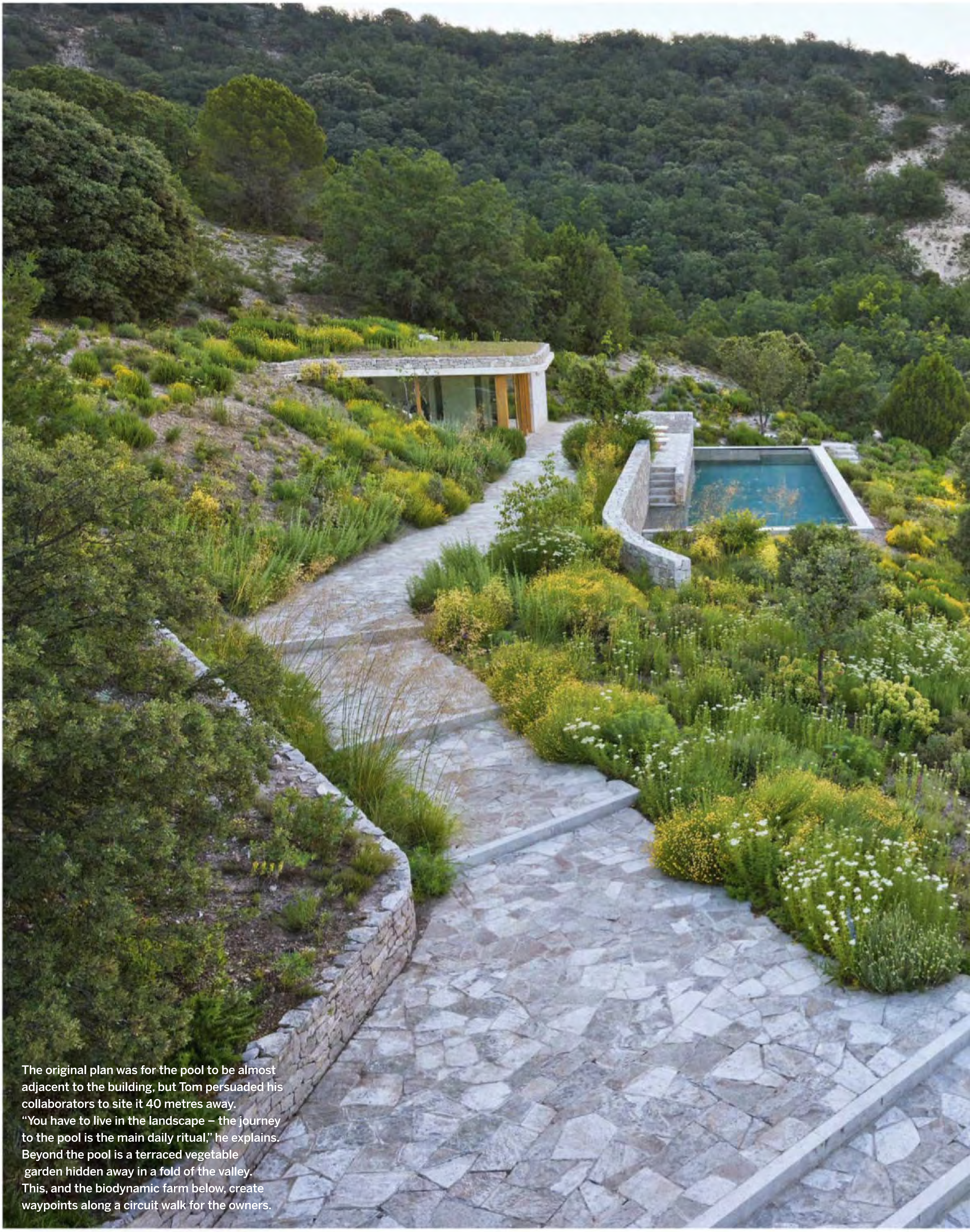
The yellow mounds of *Santolina chamaecyparissus*, offset by purple spikes of *Salvia officinalis* (behind) and *Hyssopus officinalis* (in the foreground), form a dense matrix close to the main building. (The santolina is now subject to a pruning regime.) The deep green of rosemary forms a counterpoint, while in the background, further up the hillside, small clumps of the erect native grass *Stipa barbata* (top left) are just visible. "It is accelerated and diversified regeneration," Tom explains. "Closer to the main building it is very much augmented."



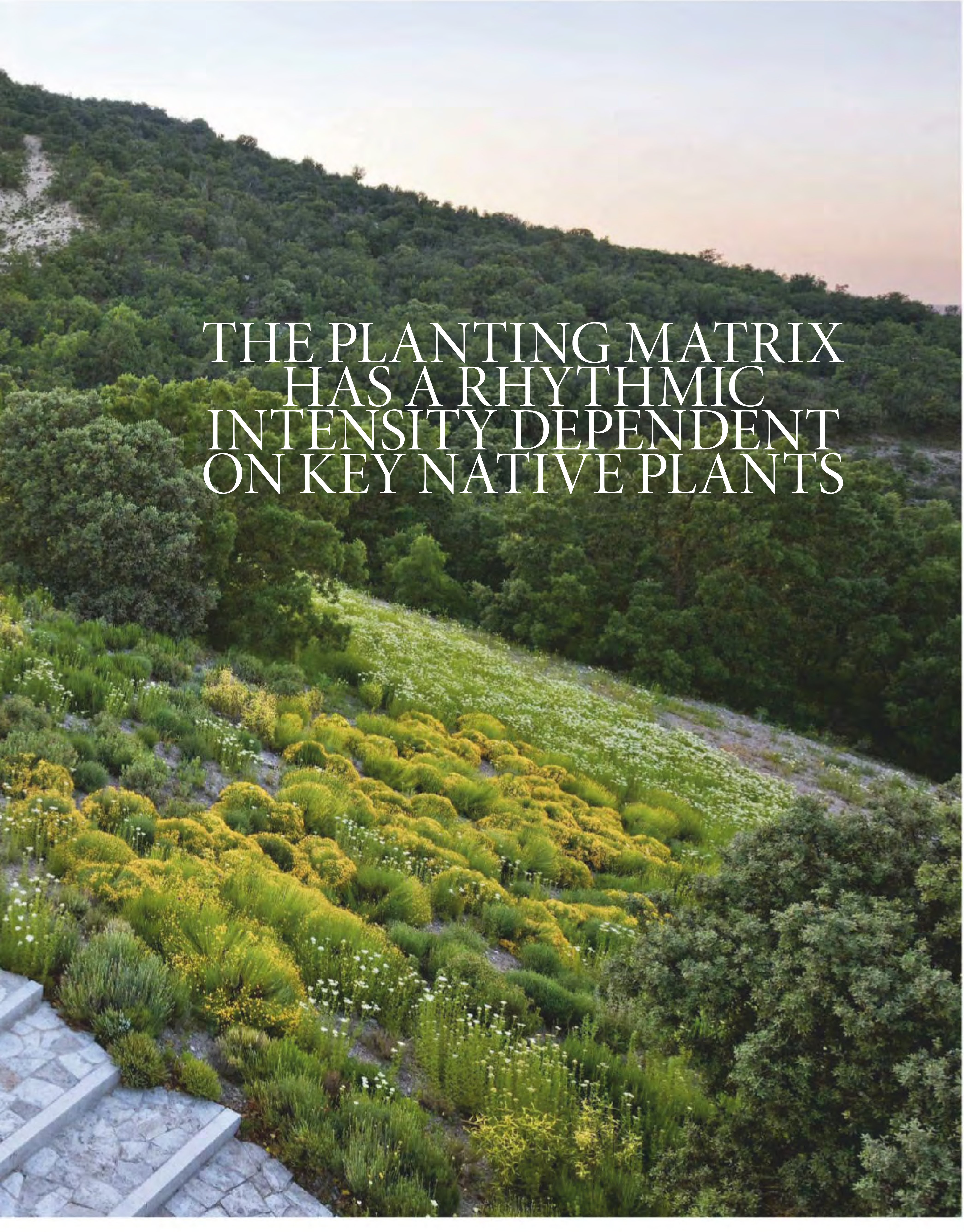
Looking up from the drive, with the garage just visible on the left, achillea dominates the planting, but more ephemeral herbs include *Salvia sclarea* var. *turkestaniana* 'Vatican Pink' and *Echium vulgare*. The distinctive pierced limestone aesthetic of main building, by Danish architect Henning Larsen, can be seen beyond; in some ways this is a vessel for light and a viewing chamber for the garden and landscape. If any of the planting is bold enough to grow quickly, it is given an annual haircut with a hedge trimmer in autumn. Otherwise plants such as cistus and rosemary would get straggly and could potentially become a fire hazard with time.



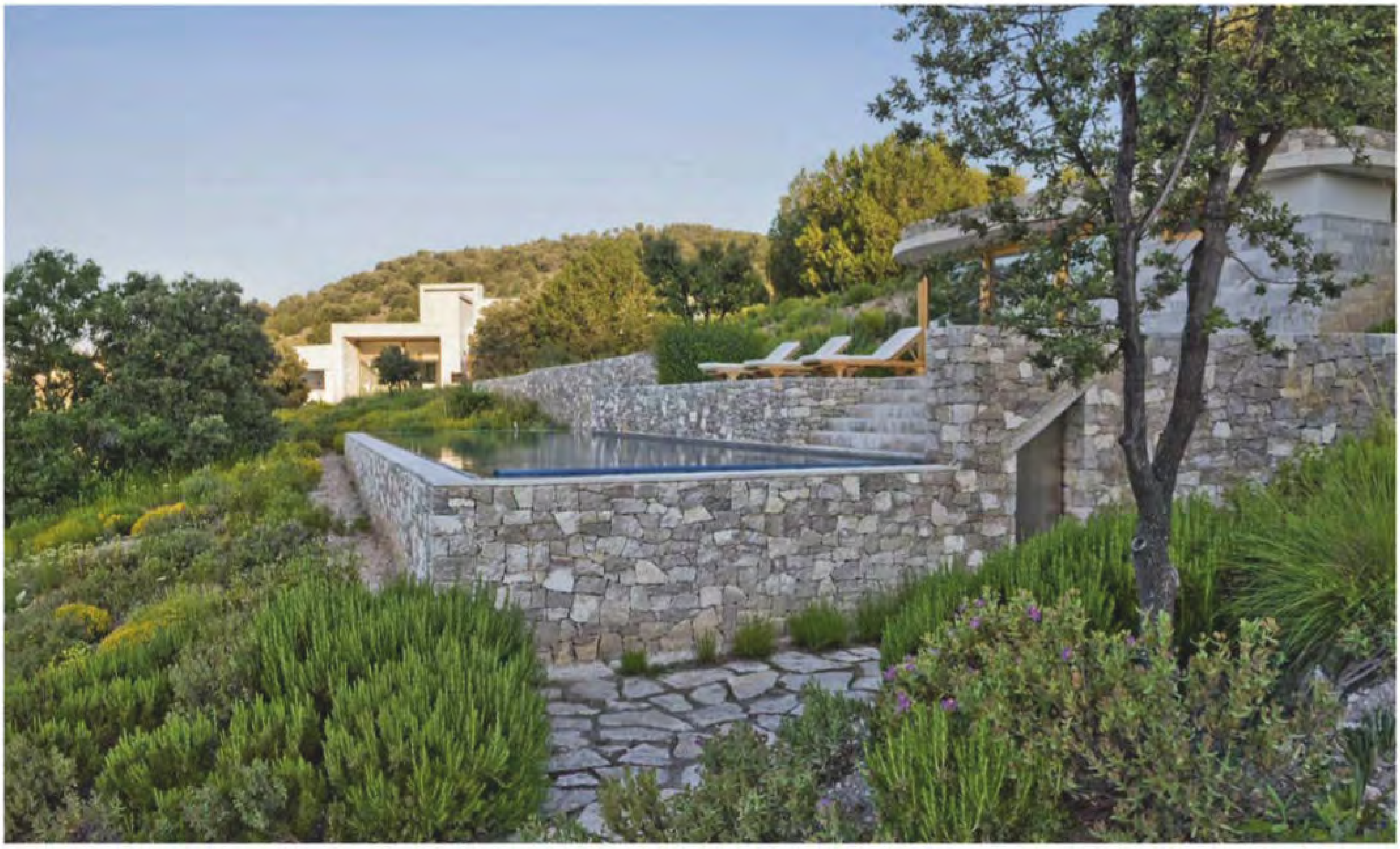
The approach road to the property, with *Spartium junceum* (a broom-like deciduous shrub with slender green stems bearing fragrant, pea-like yellow flowers) in the foreground and clumps of salvia and hyssop growing in the gravelly soil. The drive up is engineered so that there are no views across the panoramic valley landscape – evergreen oaks have been used as screens around the parked cars. It is only when you emerge on to the main building's terrace or balcony that the full, stark grandeur of the valley is revealed.



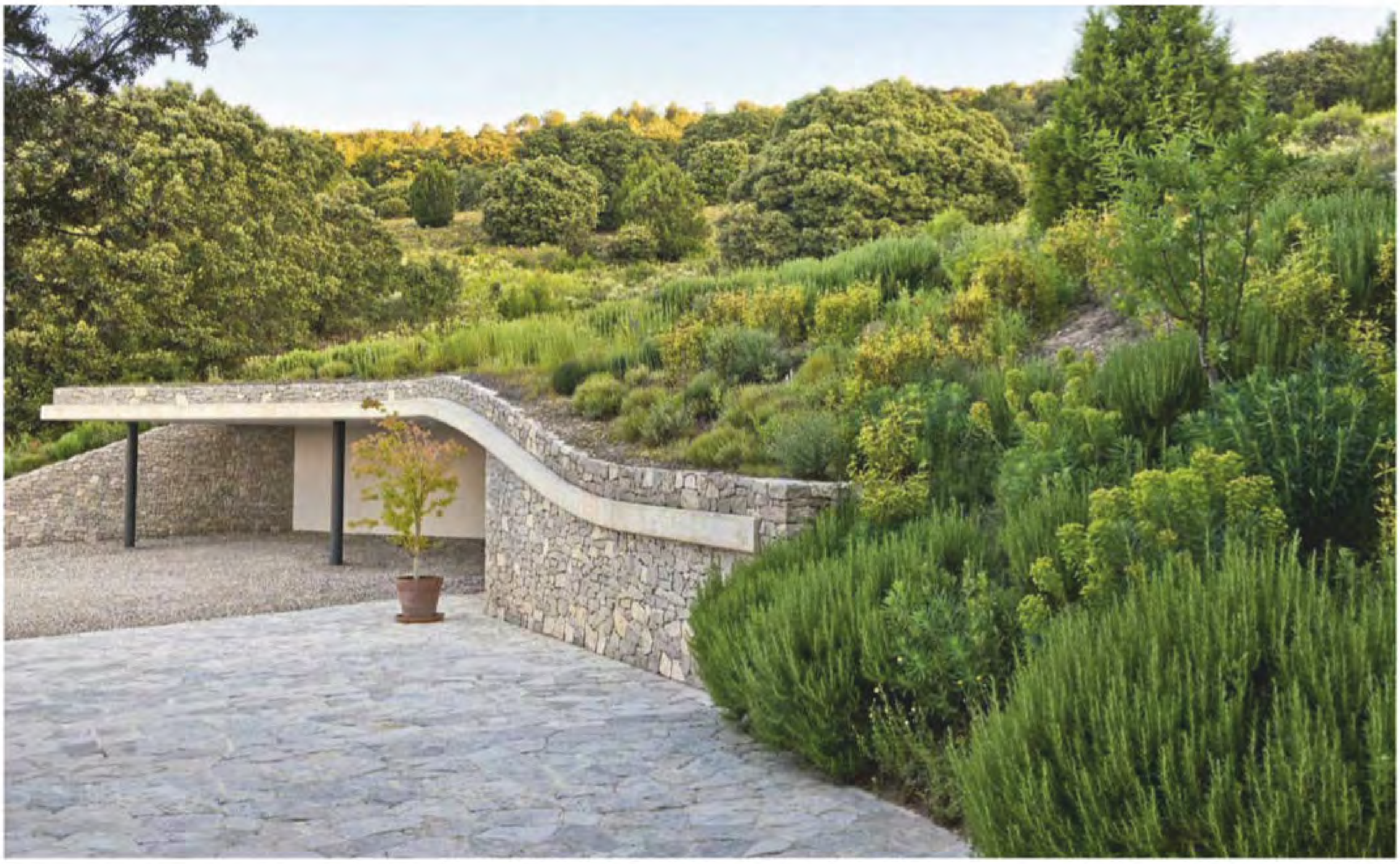
The original plan was for the pool to be almost adjacent to the building, but Tom persuaded his collaborators to site it 40 metres away. "You have to live in the landscape – the journey to the pool is the main daily ritual," he explains. Beyond the pool is a terraced vegetable garden hidden away in a fold of the valley. This, and the biodynamic farm below, create waypoints along a circuit walk for the owners.



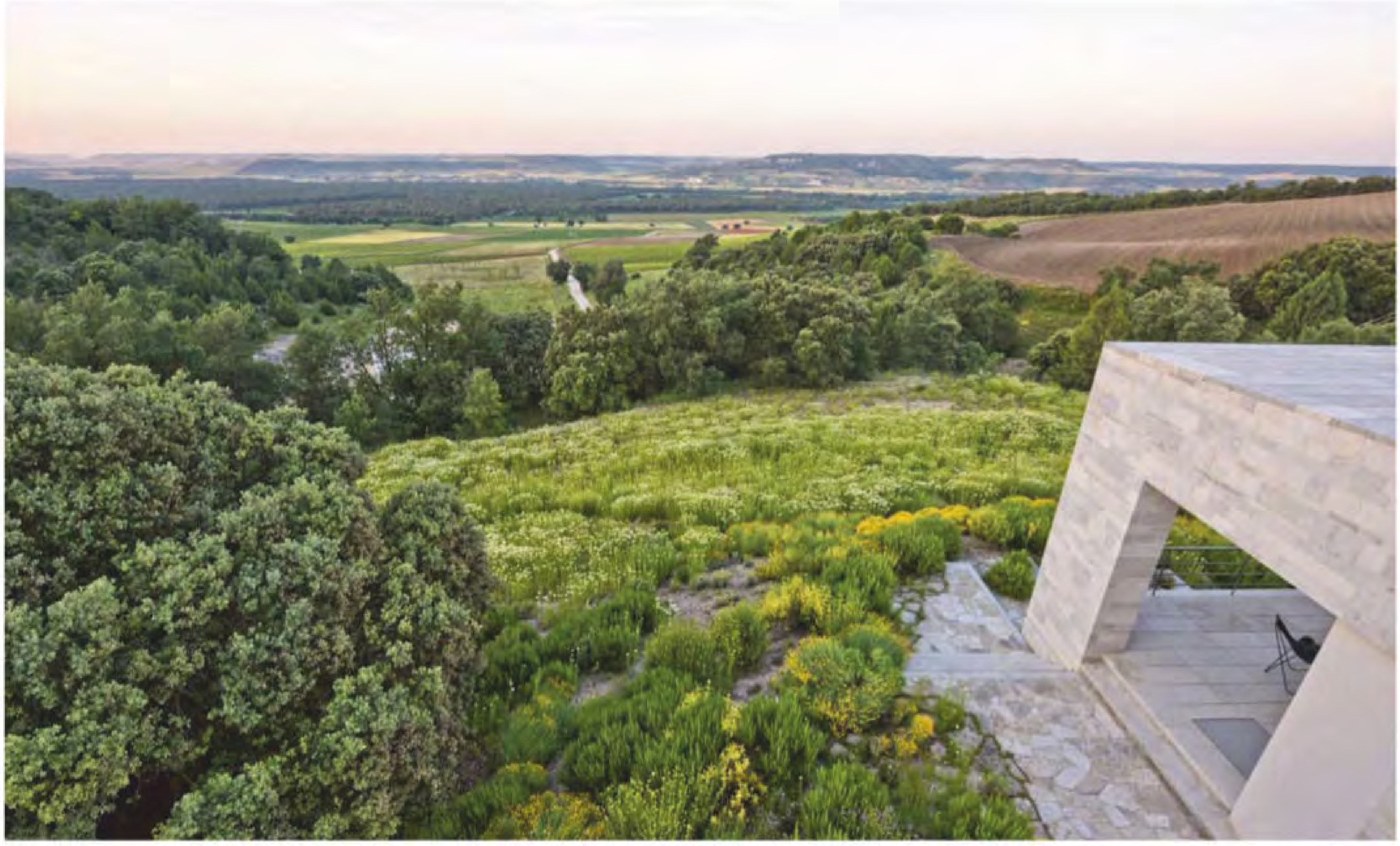
THE PLANTING MATRIX HAS A RHYTHMIC INTENSITY DEPENDENT ON KEY NATIVE PLANTS



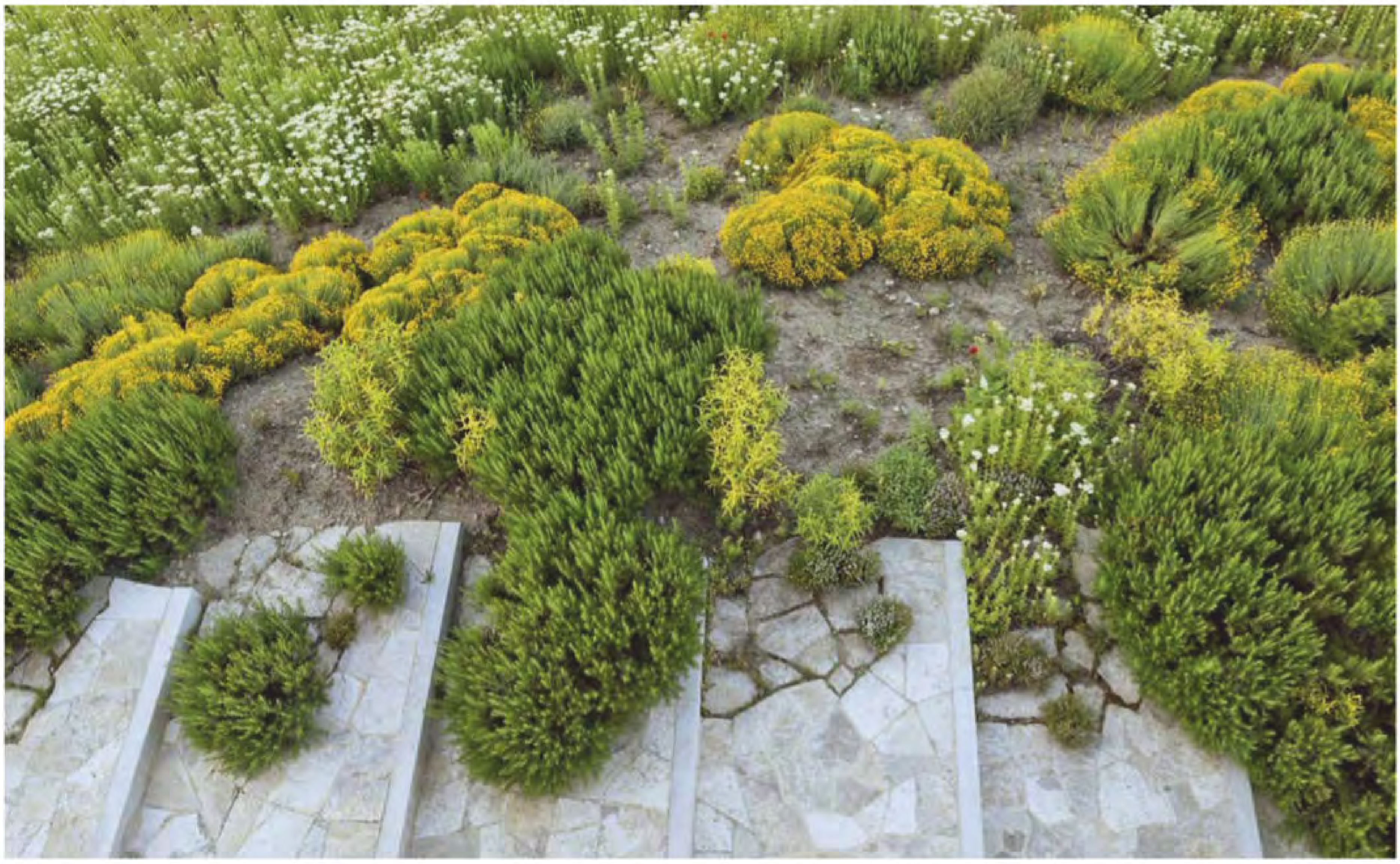
From the pool, the area of hillside above the property can be seen in the background. Tom's plantings are gradually colonising this area. In the foreground, the 'crazy paving' limestone is visible. It is deliberately fragmented at the edges, and the edges jointed with soil instead of lime, to encourage the rosemary, santolina, helichrysum and other plants to colonise and further blur the boundaries between garden and architecture. The terrace and path that connects the main building with pool and gym is made from the same stone, so that the whole reads as one entity in the landscape.



The roof of a car-parking shelter is planted with *Thymus zygis*, *T. vulgaris*, rosemary and *Euphorbia characias*. To the right is a young almond tree. The garage is made from the same limestone as the other built structures, expressed in three forms: as drystone walling, 'crazy paving' for the ground plane, and smooth blocks for the main building. The rosemary and euphorbia planted by Tom in the gardened areas have taken well to the slopes up above the main building, outside the purlieu of the garden proper, while the native trees *Quercus ilex* subsp. *rotundifolia* and *Juniperus thurifera* effortlessly add structural interest and scale to the scene.



The terrace continues along the front of the building, slightly squeezed where it continues below the balcony connected to a private area of the building. Overall the architecture, and the use of limestone quarried just a few miles away as the chief material, is unusually well meshed with the garden, not least because architect, landscape designer and client worked closely together and in sympathy with the surroundings. In the valley bottom in the distance are agricultural plantations of stone pines, a commercial source of pine nuts in this hard-working landscape.



The limestone terrace is deliberately fragmented at the edges to allow the rosemary, santolina, helichrysum and other plants to colonise and further blur the boundaries between garden and main building. The ultimate aim is to create a building and cultivated garden/landscape around it that look as if they have arisen almost naturally from the site. The terrace and path that connects the main building with pool and gym is made from the same stone as the building, so that the whole reads as one seamless entity in the landscape.

HOME FRONT

In his private garden in California, designer Bernard Trainor explores new plants and possibilities

WORDS STEPHANIE MAHON PHOTOGRAPHS CLAIRE TAKACS

IN BRIEF

What Sloping coastal garden with drought-tolerant plants.
Where Monterey County, California, USA.
Size One acre.
Soil Coastal dune sand on bedrock.
Climate Temperate maritime, cooler than elsewhere in California; dry but with summer fogs.
Hardiness zone USDA 10a.

Redwood timber steps lead from the lower level up to the house and guest house. The slope is planted with a diverse variety of succulents, including a spectacular *Aeonium*, garden hybrid Bernard is trialling, shrubs and perennials from around the world, all of which are drought tolerant. Apart from pots, Bernard does not water his plants once they are established.

Though he has now settled in the USA, and comes originally from Australia, landscape designer. Bernard Trainor began to develop his core ideas about plants and place in Britain. As a young horticultural apprentice, he came to the UK to work with the late, great Beth Chatto, and his experience in her Essex garden was life changing. "I'd thought about planting for climate before, but working with Beth cemented those ideas," he says. "She was also just the best person, with incredible values and a real work ethic – she didn't just preach it, she lived it. Working there not only helped me with my garden design but also personally on every level. It still does. Every day, there's something in my work that reflects my time with her."

Bernard went on to study landscape design at Chelsea Physic Garden, before returning down under, but it was in California, where he moved two decades ago, that he made his name. Having gone for a job, he met his wife and ended up staying and starting his own business. The projects that his practice Ground Studio creates show the influence of his early mentor in their approach. "I'm always interested in the specifics of a particular place," he says. "I try to decide what would be most appropriate and authentic for each site, and then consider the people who are going to live there, and the architecture they're going to live in."

Another major factor for him is drought tolerance – of all the Mediterranean climate regions, it is California that gets the least amount of summer rainfall. "It becomes not only about the look of a garden, but also what resources are needed to grow plants there." This has been at the forefront of his mind over the past eight years as he created his own garden, perched high above the water of Carmel Bay on the coast of Monterey County. He had been living two hours' drive north in San Francisco when a new project began to bring him to the area regularly. "I realised that going there was the happiest day of my week. I loved the area so much." When the opportunity arose to buy this 1940s' property with an acre of land and incredible views he jumped at it. The house and guest house needed a little cosmetic work, but the garden was a blank slate, and that was a good thing, he says. "The reason I was buying the property was to create a garden, instead of inheriting somebody else's. But it was a bit of a mess."

Designers often speak of the difficulty of being their own client, and Bernard was no different. "I started out thinking I would do something minimal, with fewer plant choices, but soon realised what I really wanted was to create a sort of laboratory where I could try things out. I wanted to use a lot of cultivars, but without it looking busy, because gardens with too many plants can be visually jarring. That was my challenge – to grow lots of different plants, but in a cohesive way. I also tried to make it liveable, so it would be comfortable for my family and visitors."

The garden is steeply sloping, and its layout is dictated by several changes in level. At the lowest level, there is a simple entry courtyard with water feature, and then a gateway to a bocce [a game similar to boules] court and seating area. Steps ascend up to the main level around the house and guest house, which have their own gardens. Bernard was judicious in his choice of materials, painting and reusing old bricks that were already on site, adding areas of crushed gravel, timber steps, and paving in sandstone and concrete.

These hard edges are softened with layers of textural planting drawn from all corners of the world – a panoply of form and foliage, with a variety of spongy and spiky succulents rubbing up against soft grasses, choice perennials and anchoring shrubs. The emphasis is on managing the dry climate, so apart from containers, the plants survive without supplemental watering once they have established.

There were many mature trees in the garden when Bernard moved in, predominantly California live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*) and Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*). These natives manage without much rainfall, though they benefit in summer from the coastal fogs that roll in off the bay – the water vapour settles on the leaves and then drips down, nourishing the ground below.

Choosing the rest of the planting was a challenge, not just because of the lack of rainfall, but because of underlying rock. Behind the house, there is less than a foot of soil to plant into, and what is there is technically old sand dune and exceptionally well draining, so planting on the slope has to be even more resilient.

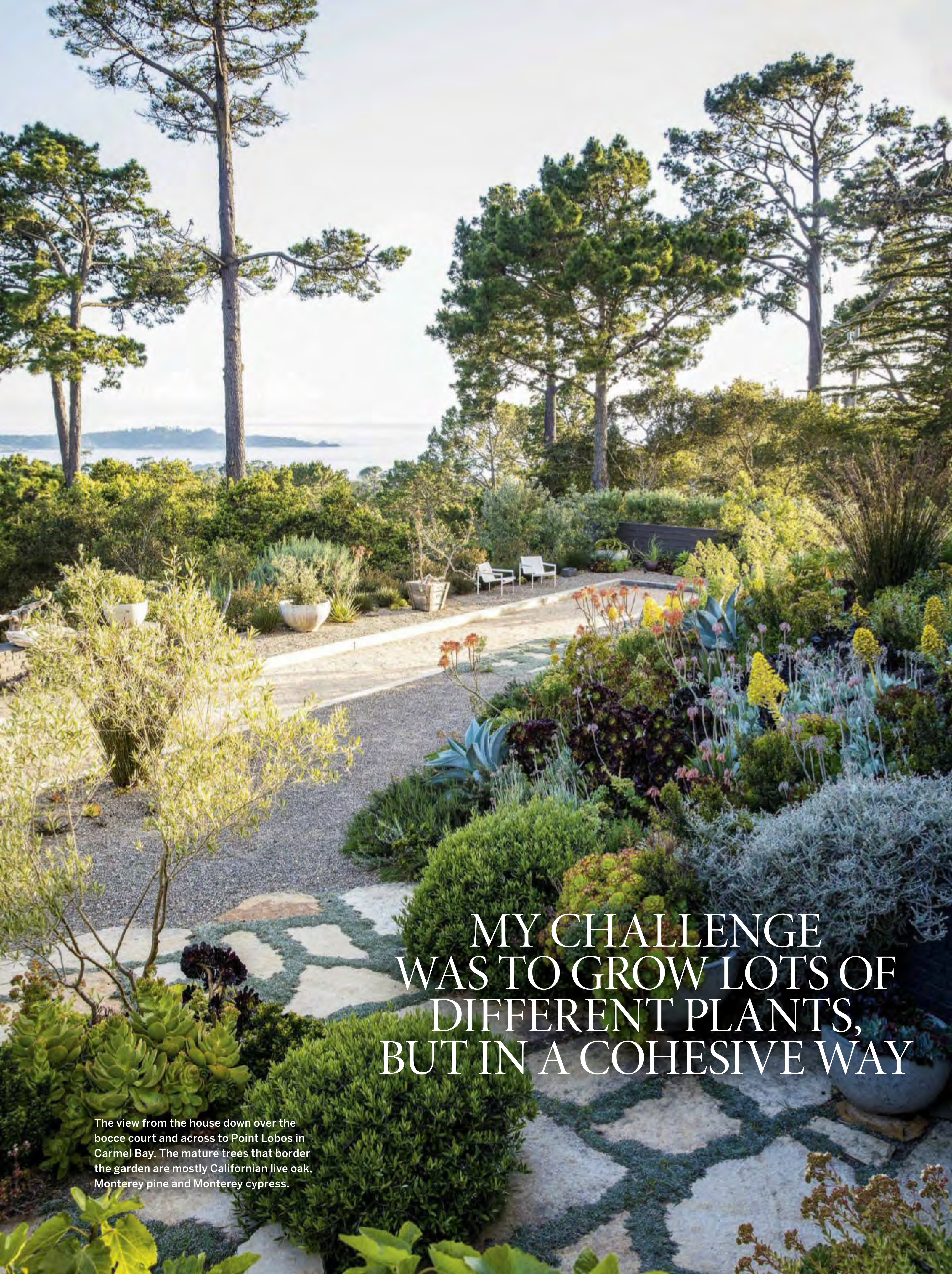
For his clients' gardens, Bernard uses native Californian plants and also those from the four other Mediterranean zones in the world: the Mediterranean basin, South Africa, Australia and central Chile. "It adds up to a pretty big palette of plants, with perhaps too many choices, which is always a good problem to have." Even with this diverse choice, however, there is one big caveat – most Mediterranean-climate plants are summer deciduous, and shut down in this period when the least amount of water is available. So, for his own garden, he turned this inherent challenge into an opportunity. "My garden looks best in winter, which is rare, and I have learned to celebrate a plant coming more alive in autumn and winter, but looking as if it is hurting a little in spring and summer. That has been a complete mindset change."

He also uses his beds and borders to trial new cultivars, to find out how drought tolerant they are, what size they grow to and how long they perform for. "I experiment with growing things in new ways too," he explains. "I might shape something or clip it more than I would in a client's garden, to see how it responds. It's all about stretching myself as a designer. I'm always refining things." The garden is also Bernard's own personal retreat. "I love just puttering around," he says. "Much of my time here is spent gardening or painting. This is where I get my satisfaction." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

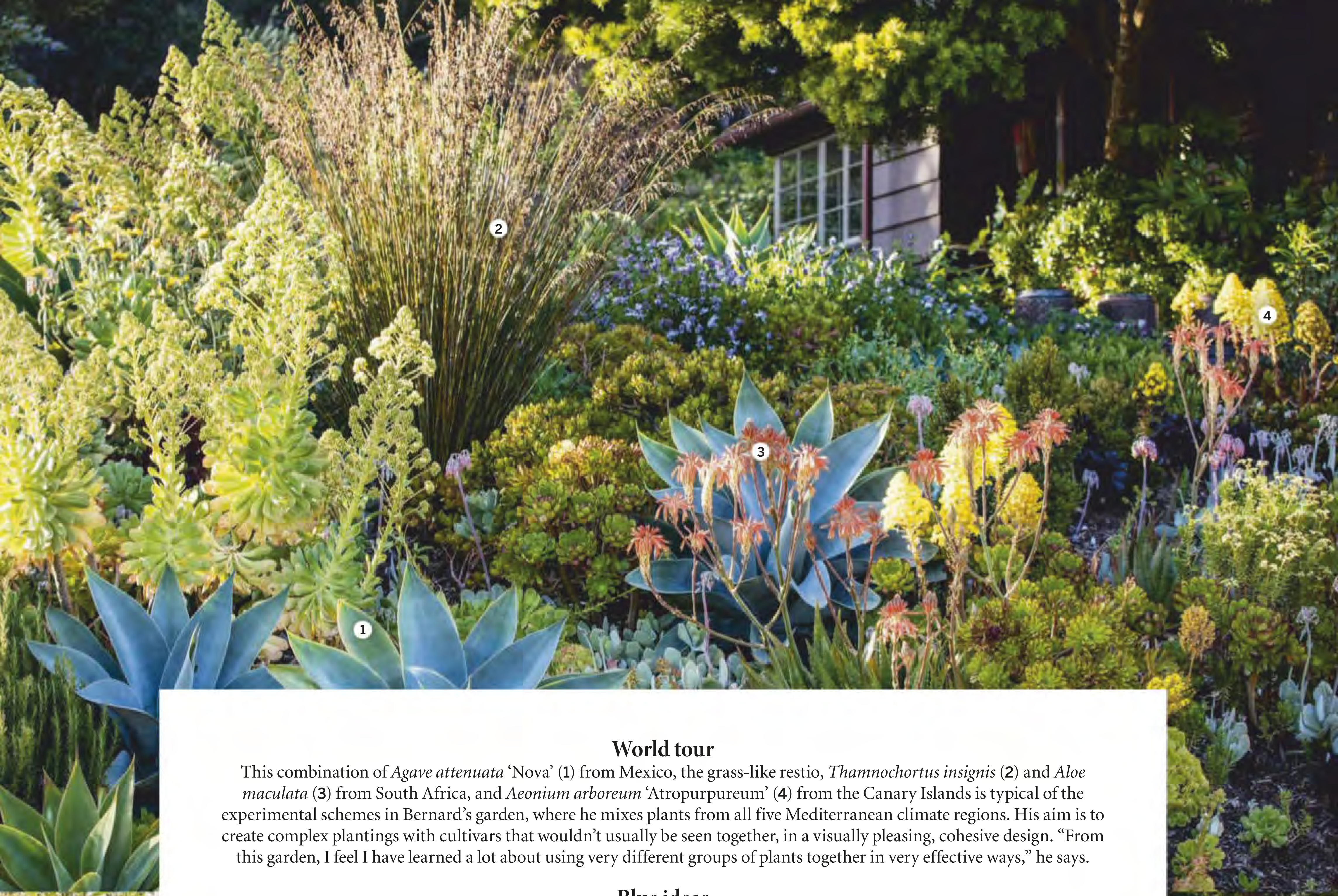
Find out more about Bernard's work at **groundstudio.com**

Turn the page to see more of Bernard's garden and his key plants



MY CHALLENGE WAS TO GROW LOTS OF DIFFERENT PLANTS, BUT IN A COHESIVE WAY

The view from the house down over the bocce court and across to Point Lobos in Carmel Bay. The mature trees that border the garden are mostly Californian live oak, Monterey pine and Monterey cypress.

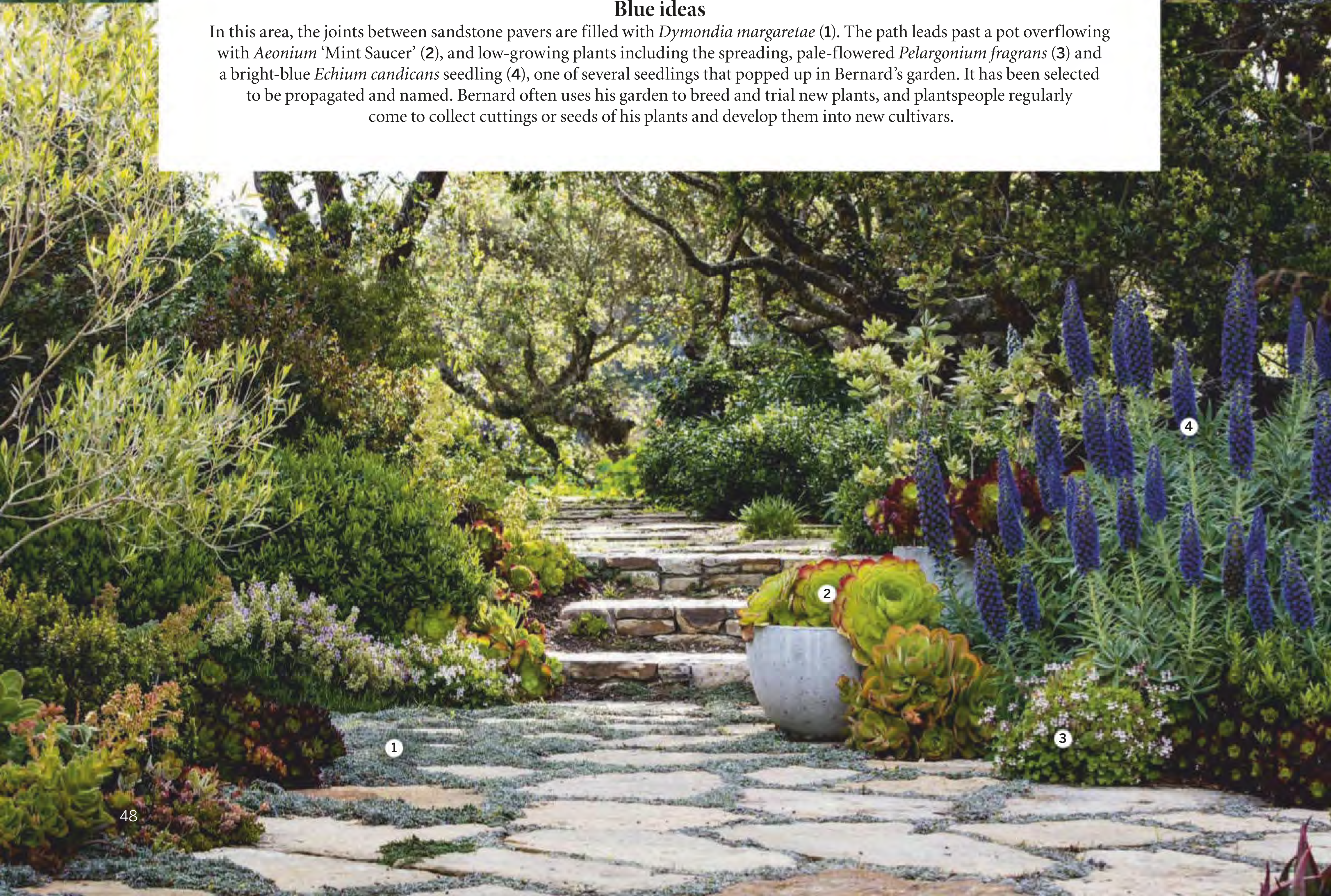


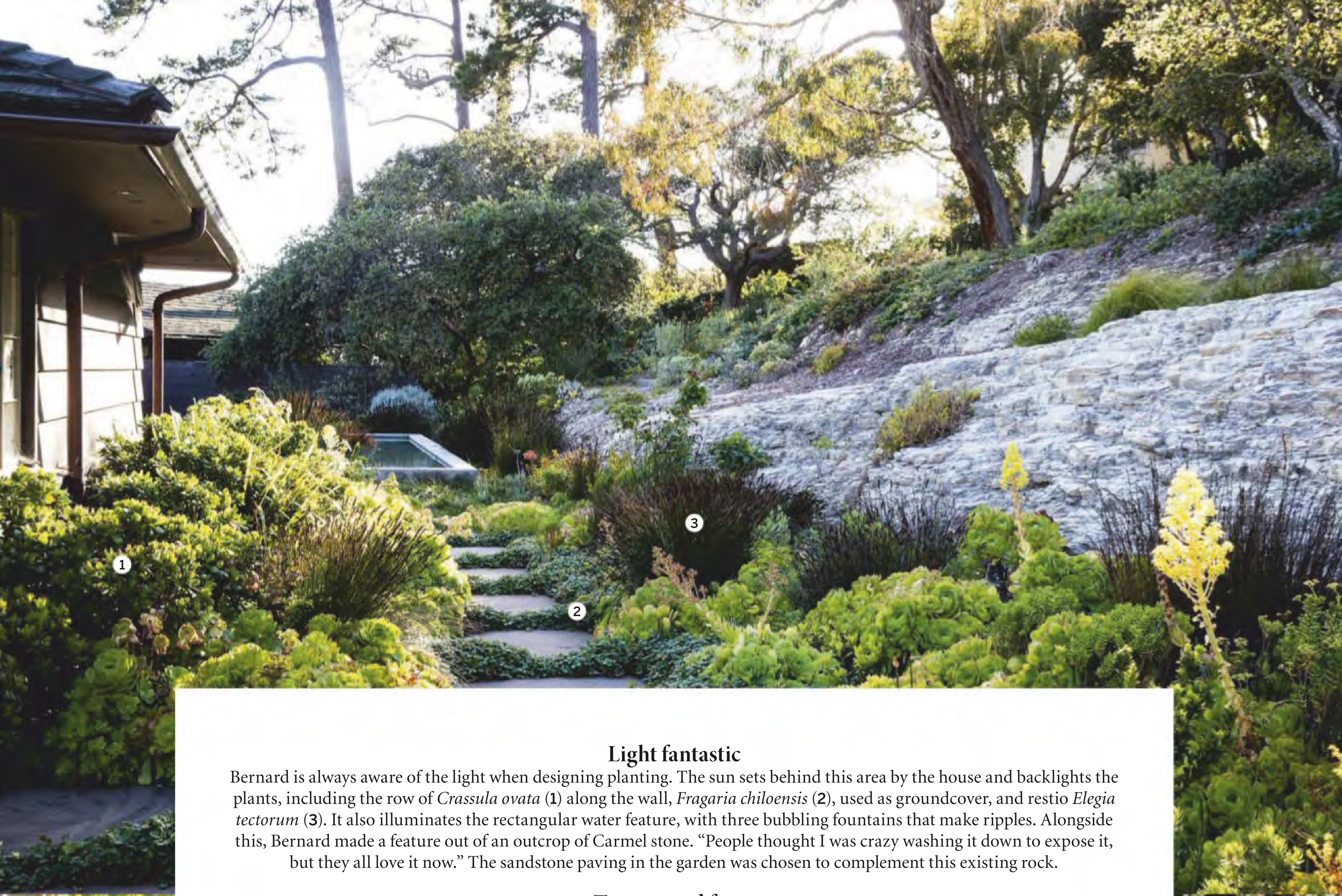
World tour

This combination of *Agave attenuata* 'Nova' (**1**) from Mexico, the grass-like restio, *Thamnochortus insignis* (**2**) and *Aloe maculata* (**3**) from South Africa, and *Aeonium arboreum* 'Atropurpureum' (**4**) from the Canary Islands is typical of the experimental schemes in Bernard's garden, where he mixes plants from all five Mediterranean climate regions. His aim is to create complex plantings with cultivars that wouldn't usually be seen together, in a visually pleasing, cohesive design. "From this garden, I feel I have learned a lot about using very different groups of plants together in very effective ways," he says.

Blue ideas

In this area, the joints between sandstone pavers are filled with *Dymondia margaretae* (**1**). The path leads past a pot overflowing with *Aeonium* 'Mint Saucer' (**2**), and low-growing plants including the spreading, pale-flowered *Pelargonium fragrans* (**3**) and a bright-blue *Echium candicans* seedling (**4**), one of several seedlings that popped up in Bernard's garden. It has been selected to be propagated and named. Bernard often uses his garden to breed and trial new plants, and plantspeople regularly come to collect cuttings or seeds of his plants and develop them into new cultivars.



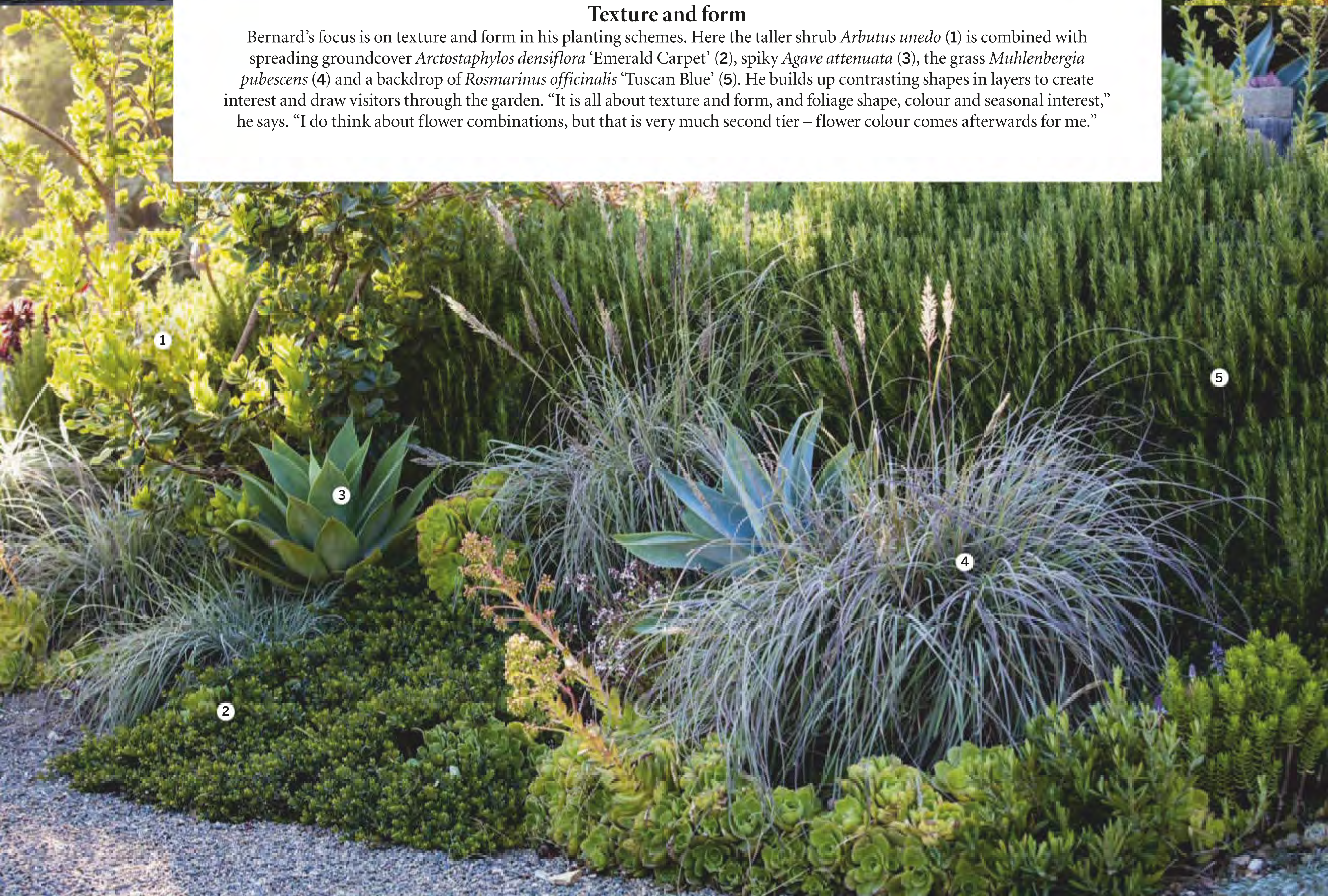


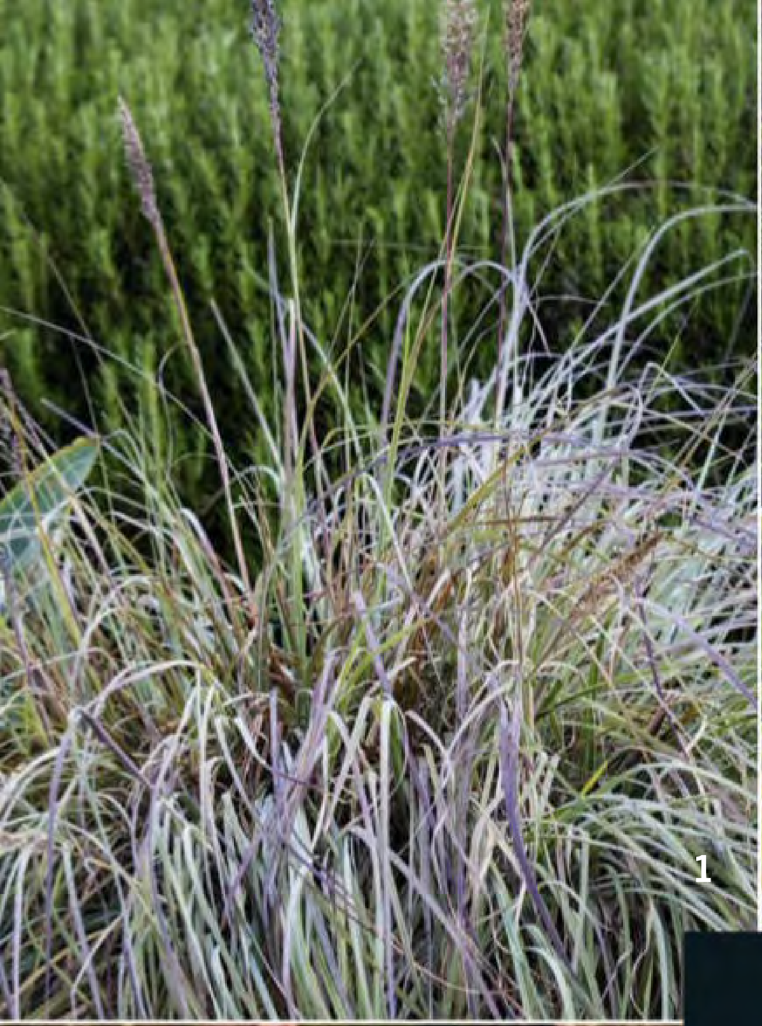
Light fantastic

Bernard is always aware of the light when designing planting. The sun sets behind this area by the house and backlights the plants, including the row of *Crassula ovata* (**1**) along the wall, *Fragaria chiloensis* (**2**), used as groundcover, and restio *Elegia tectorum* (**3**). It also illuminates the rectangular water feature, with three bubbling fountains that make ripples. Alongside this, Bernard made a feature out of an outcrop of Carmel stone. "People thought I was crazy washing it down to expose it, but they all love it now." The sandstone paving in the garden was chosen to complement this existing rock.

Texture and form

Bernard's focus is on texture and form in his planting schemes. Here the taller shrub *Arbutus unedo* (**1**) is combined with spreading groundcover *Arctostaphylos densiflora* 'Emerald Carpet' (**2**), spiky *Agave attenuata* (**3**), the grass *Muhlenbergia pubescens* (**4**) and a backdrop of *Rosmarinus officinalis* 'Tuscan Blue' (**5**). He builds up contrasting shapes in layers to create interest and draw visitors through the garden. "It is all about texture and form, and foliage shape, colour and seasonal interest," he says. "I do think about flower combinations, but that is very much second tier – flower colour comes afterwards for me."

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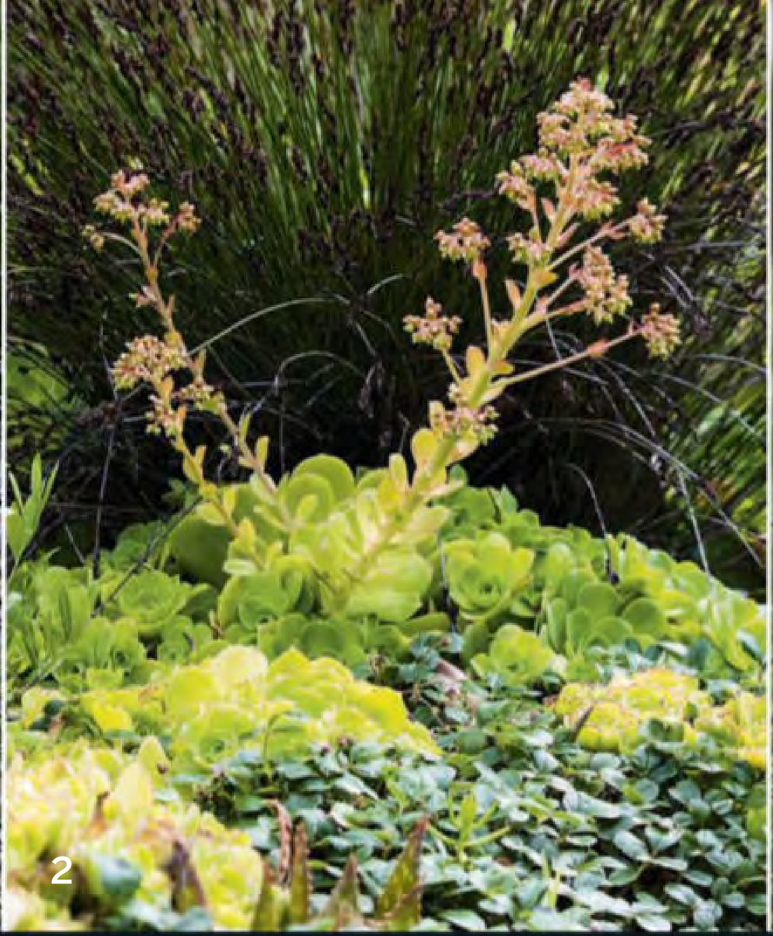
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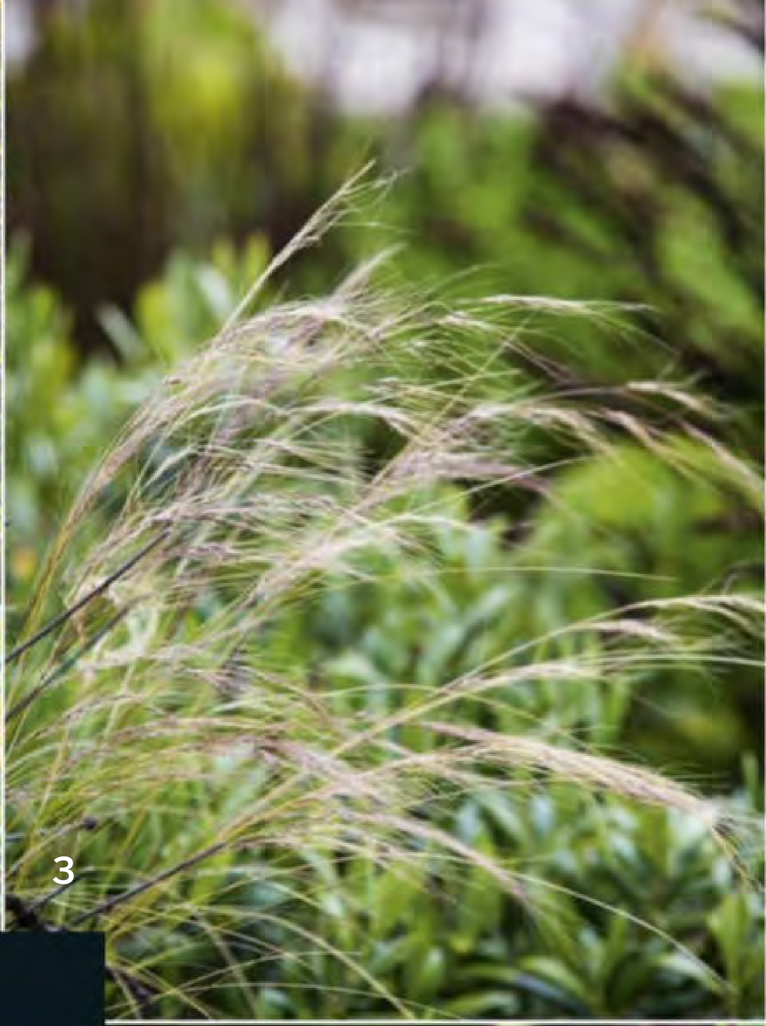
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16 KEY PLANTS

1 *Muhlenbergia pubescens*
A drought-tolerant, semi-evergreen grass that creates soft mounds of metallic-blue foliage with a weeping habit and pale-mauve flowers in autumn. 90cm. RHS H4, USDA 8b-10b[†].

2 *Aeonium canariense*
A beautiful succulent grown for its green rosettes. The foliage spreads and reaches 30cm high, but taller, creamy yellow flower spikes emerge in spring. 1m. RHS H3, USDA 9b-11.

3 *Stipa* species from Chile
This ornamental grass, related to Mexican feathergrass, is one of many plants Bernard is trialling in his garden.

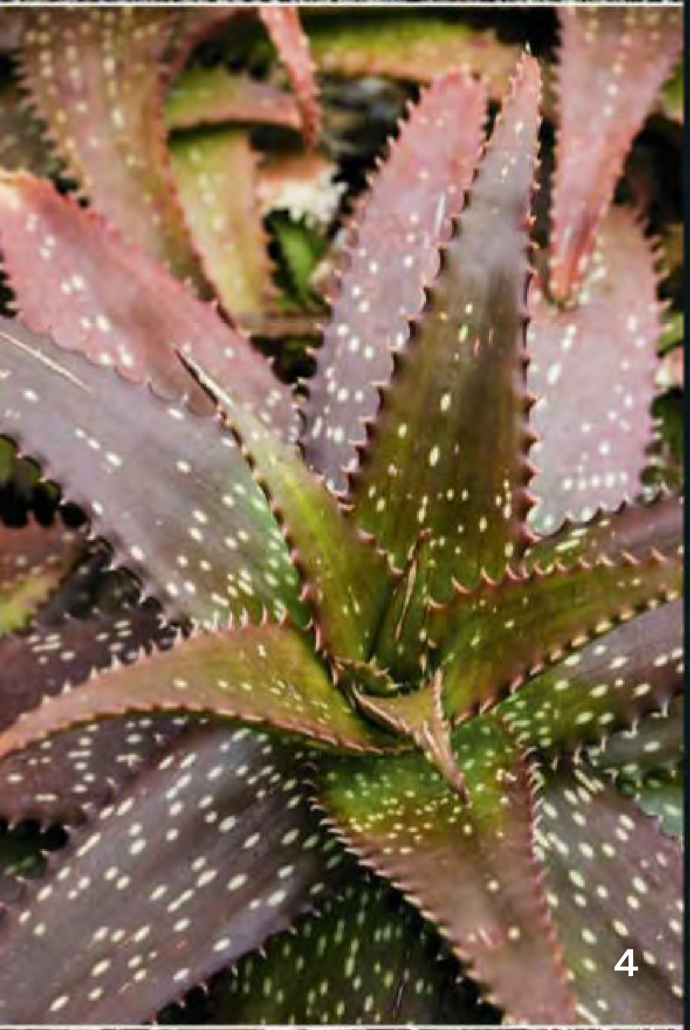
4 *Aloe greenii*
From South Africa, this aloe has spots across its narrow leaves and tall pinkish flower spikes in autumn. 60cm. RHS H3, USDA 10a-12.

5 *Cotyledon* 'Mint Truffles'
A new cotyledon cultivar that spreads laterally as opposed to upwards, with minty-green leaves edged in red. 40cm. RHS H4, USDA 9a-11.

6 *Dymondia margaretae*
The groundcover commonly known as silver carpet does well without irrigation. It has bronzed-green foliage with pale undersides and bright yellow blooms in summer. 7cm. RHS H3, USDA 9b-11.

7 *Pittosporum crassifolium*
An evergreen shrub or tree from New Zealand with thick, downy-grey foliage and dark-red flowers. Salt tolerant so good for coastal gardens. 10m. RHS H4, USDA 8b-10b.

8 *Cotyledon orbiculata* var. *oblonga*
This succulent has smooth silver-green pointed leaves that contrast with its coral-red blooms. These blooms appear continuously throughout the season. 1.2m. RHS H3, USDA 9b-11.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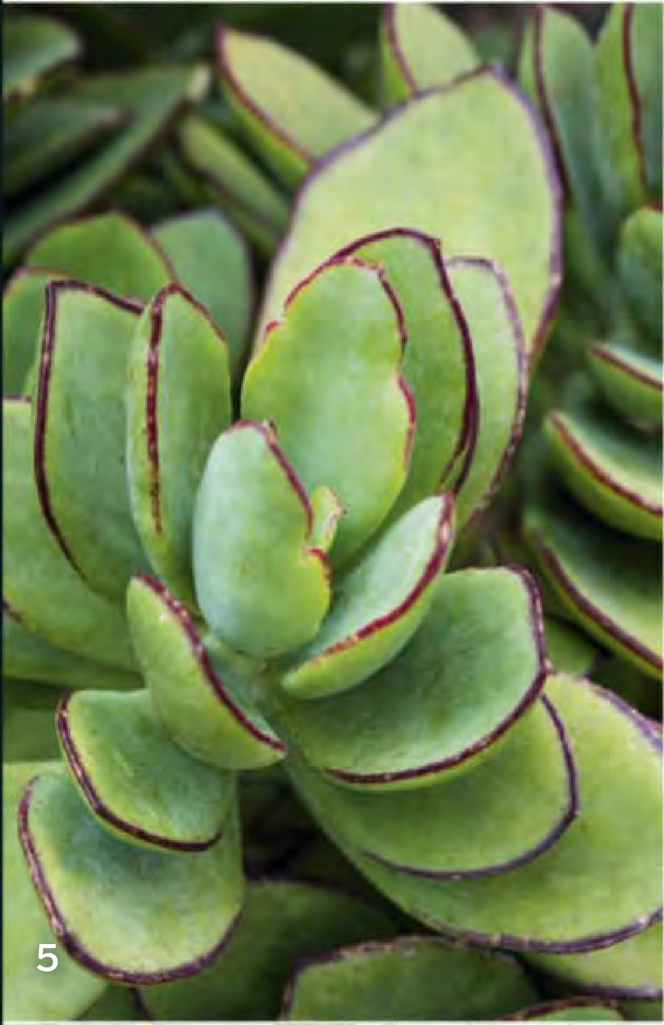
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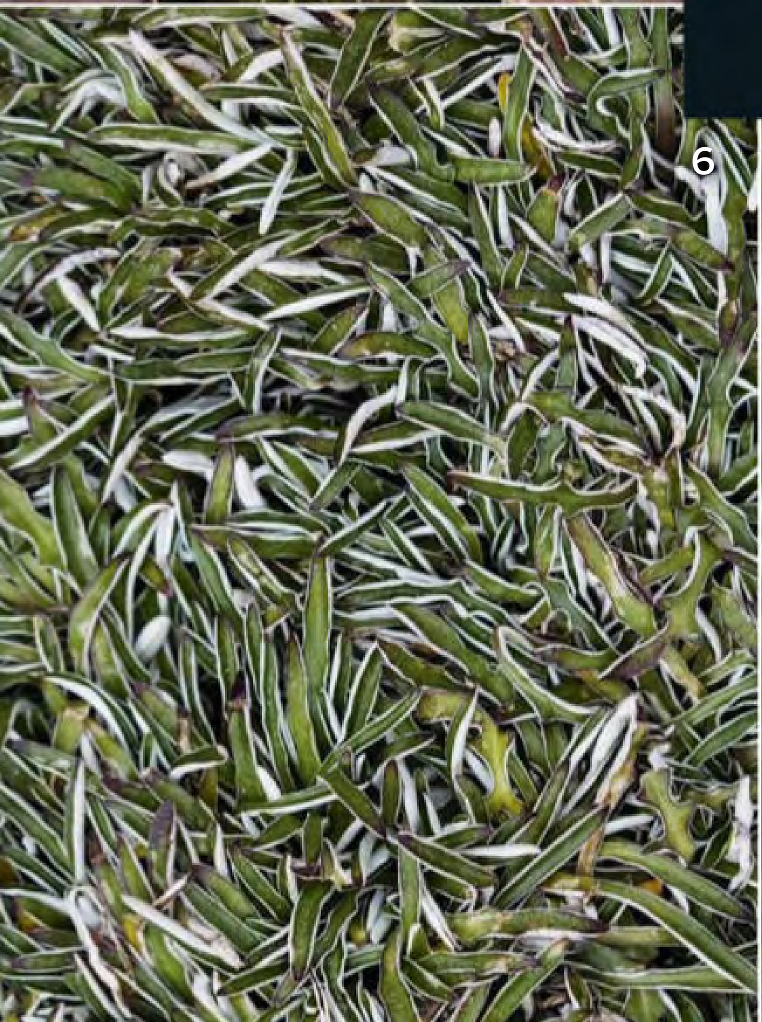
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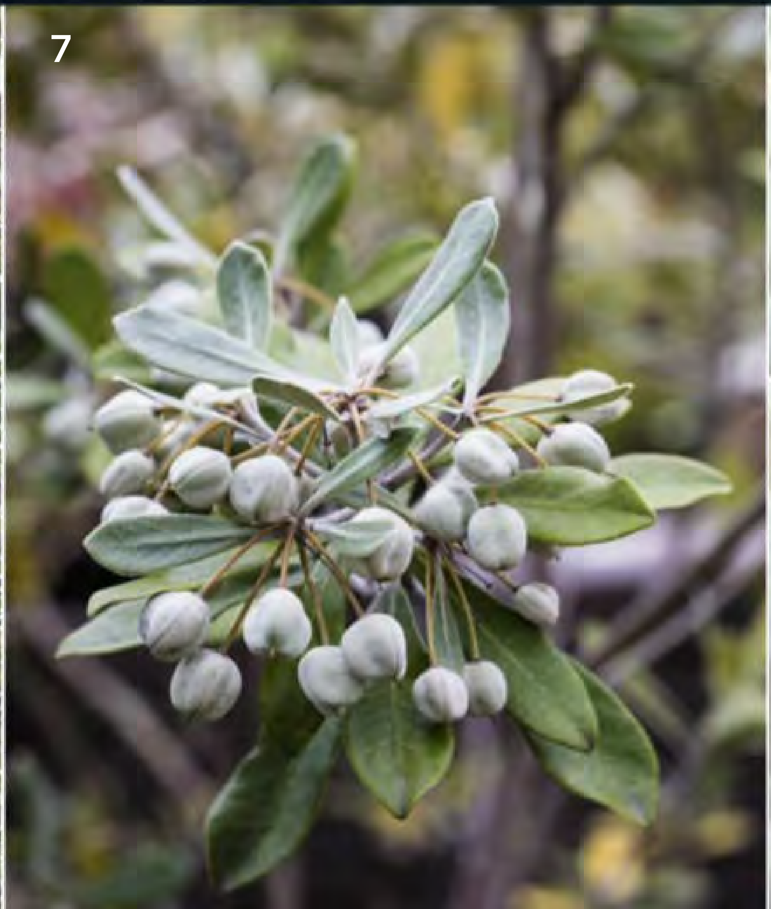
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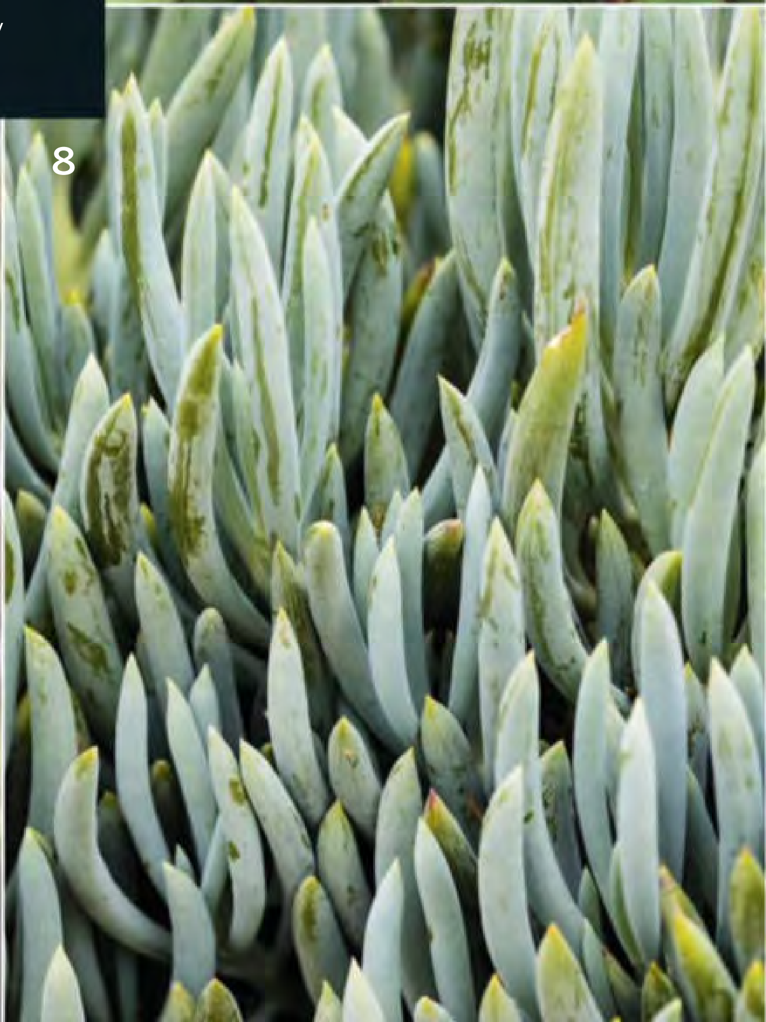
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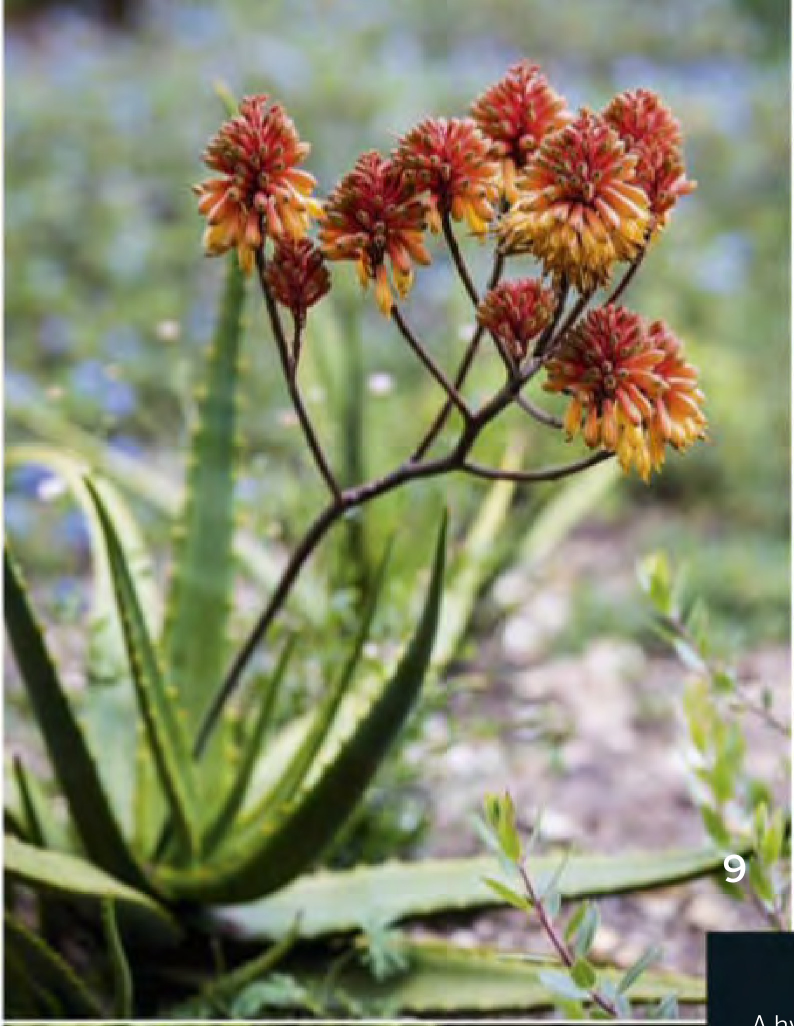

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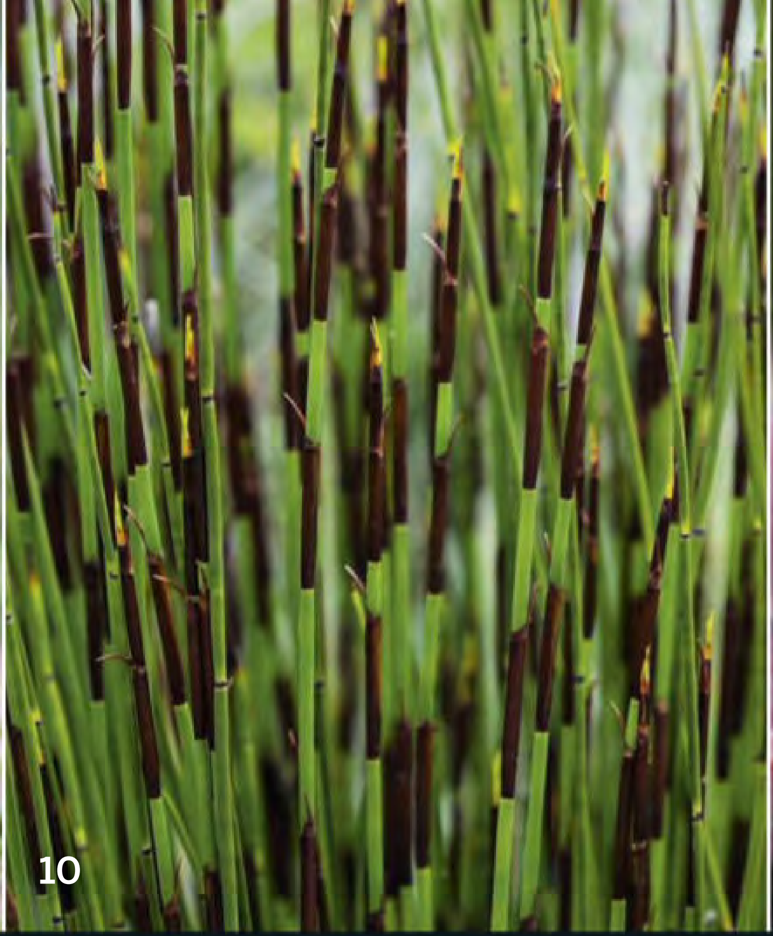

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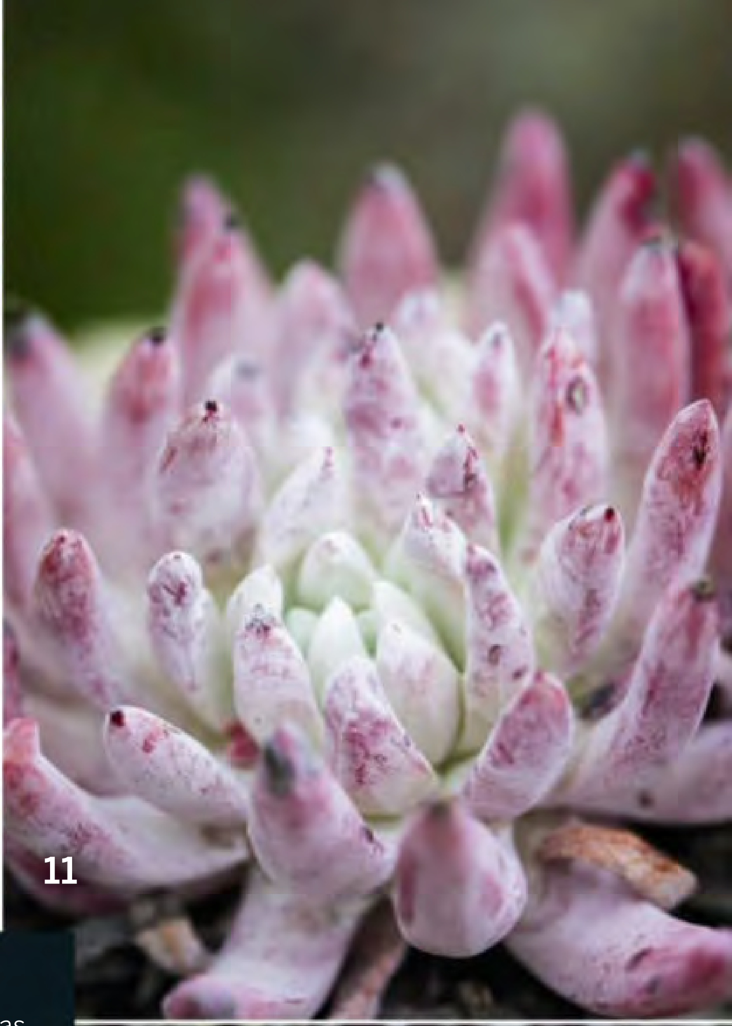

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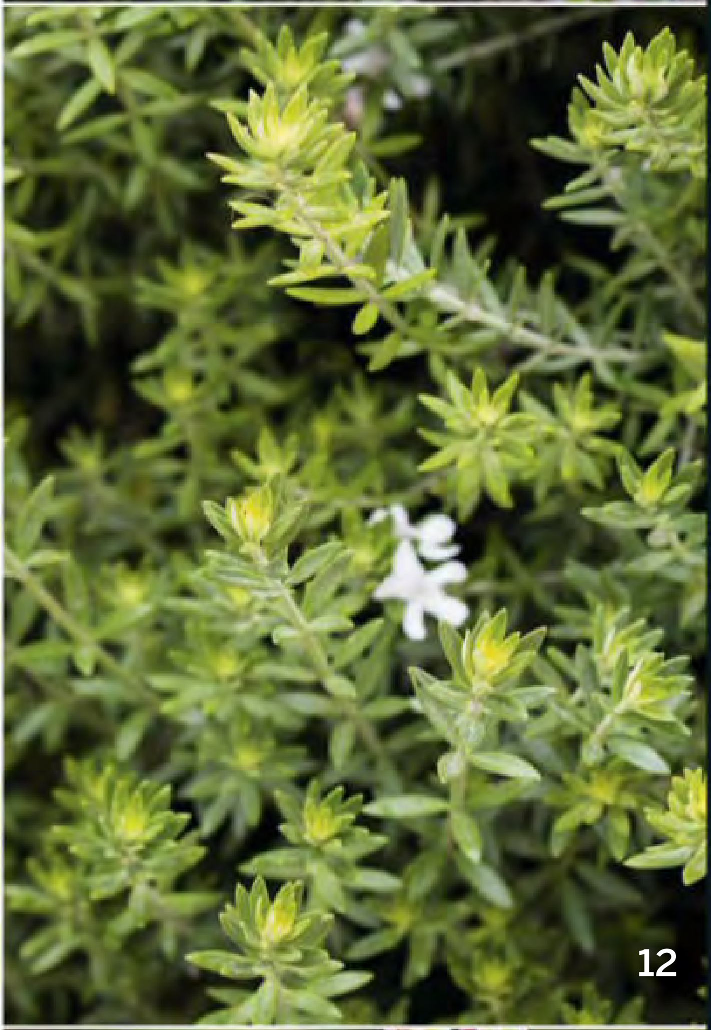

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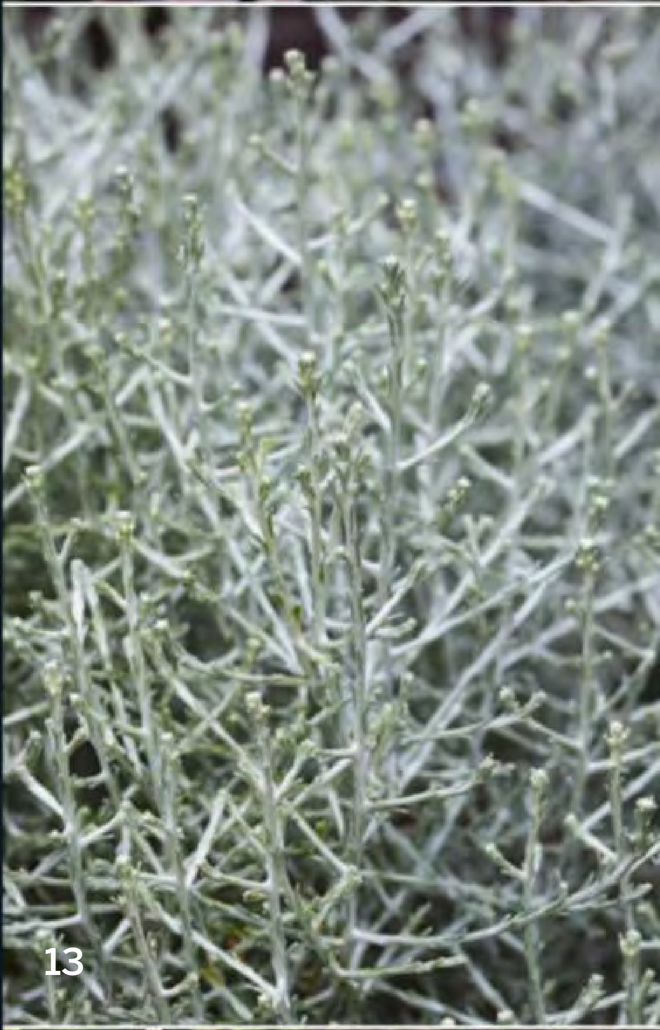

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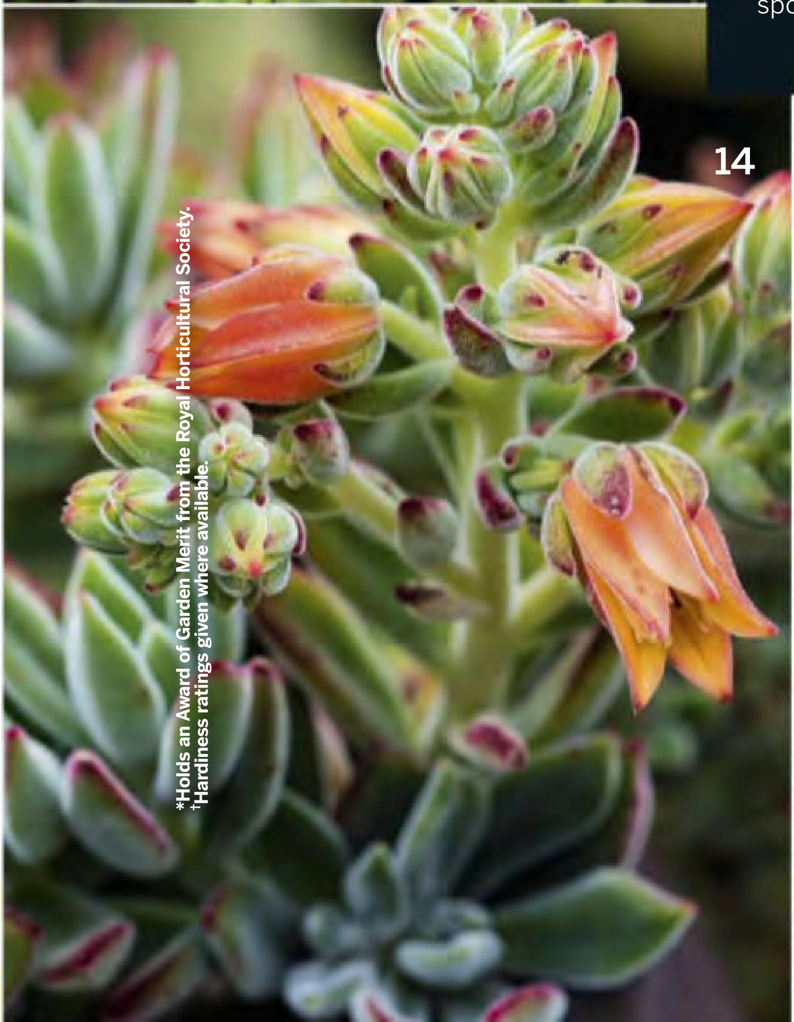

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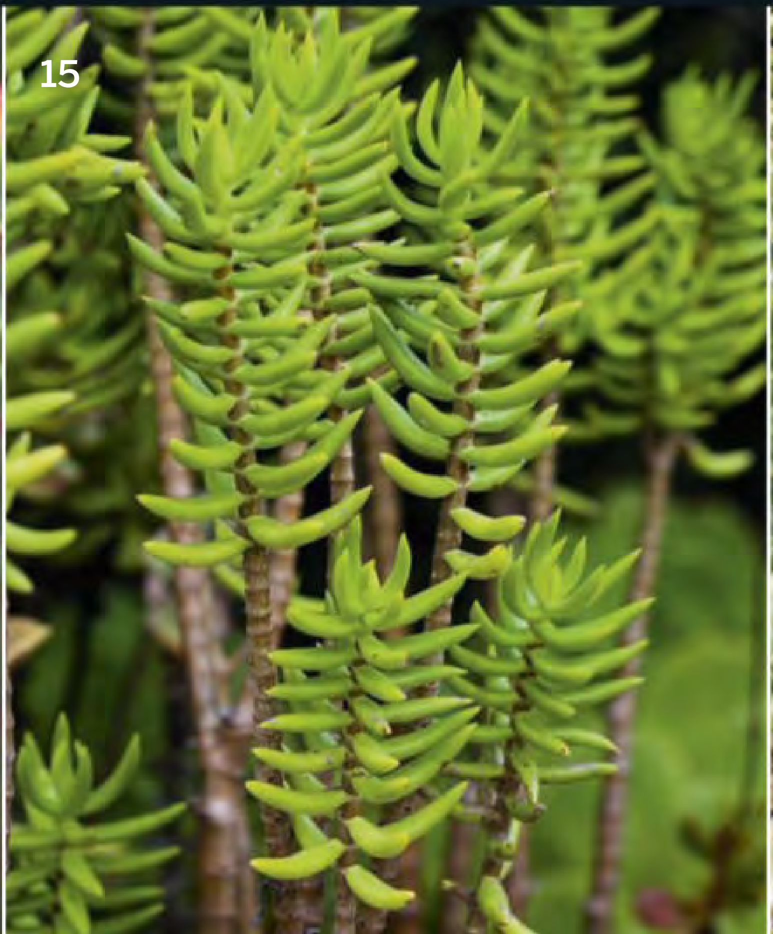

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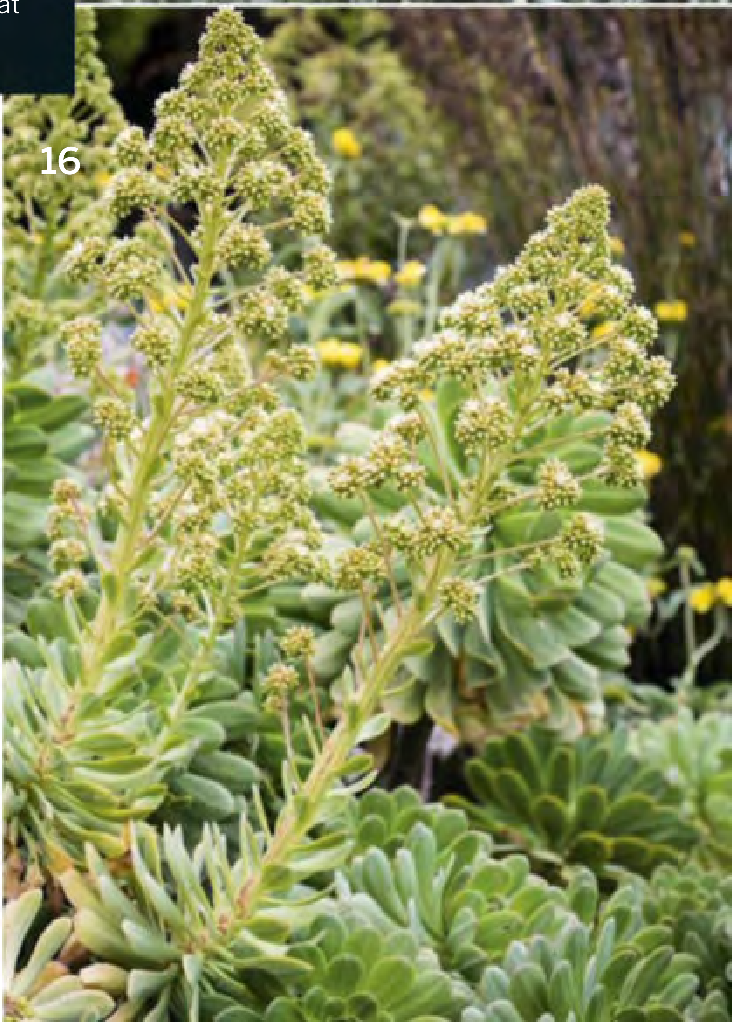

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9 *Aloe* 'Rooikappie'

A hybrid bred in South Africa; its Afrikaans cultivar name translates as Red Riding Hood. The orange-yellow flowers branch up from dense clusters of green rosettes all year. 30cm. RHS H4, USDA 9a-12.

10 *Elegia tectorum* 'El Campo'

This compact reed-like restio sends out multiple dark-green stems banded with brown bracts, and ending in dark chocolate-coloured flowerheads. 90cm. RHS H4, USDA 9a-11.

11 *Dudleya hassei*

A low-growing succulent groundcover with glaucous grey-blue leaves that take on a beautiful pinkish tinge when grown hard without water. 90cm. RHS H3, USDA 9b-11.

12 *Westringia villosa* Mundi (= 'Wes05')

A short cultivar that works well as an evergreen, drought-tolerant groundcover in coastal plantings and needs only occasional pruning. 60cm. RHS H3, USDA 9b-11.

13 *Leucophyta brownii*

A rounded shrub with wiry, silver-white foliage, originally from Australia. Attractive silver flower buds bloom yellow. Salt and drought tolerant. 1.2m. RHS H4, USDA 9a-11.

14 *Echeveria pulvinata*

Short sprawling succulent with foliage rosettes covered in velvety smooth fine hairs. Racemes of orange flowers appear in late winter. 15cm. AGM*. RHS H2, USDA 10a-11.

15 *Crassula tetragona*

Known as the mini pine tree, this evergreen has fleshy narrow foliage growing in opposite pairs on brown stems. 90cm. RHS H3, USDA 10a-11.

16 *Aeonium, garden hybrid*

Another exclusive to Bernard's garden, selected from seedlings that spontaneously occurred. He hopes this will become a new cultivar that can be propagated for sale in the future.

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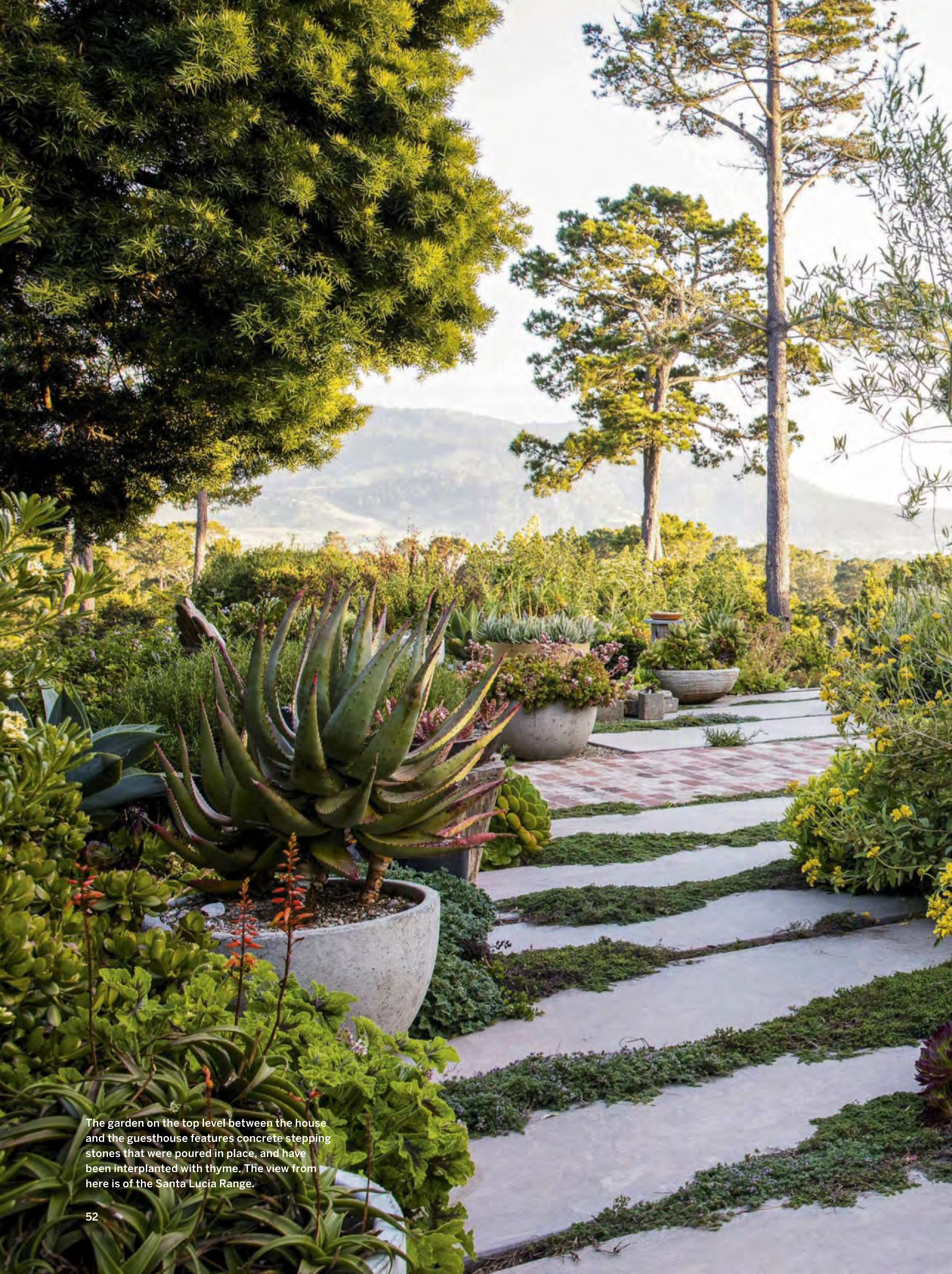
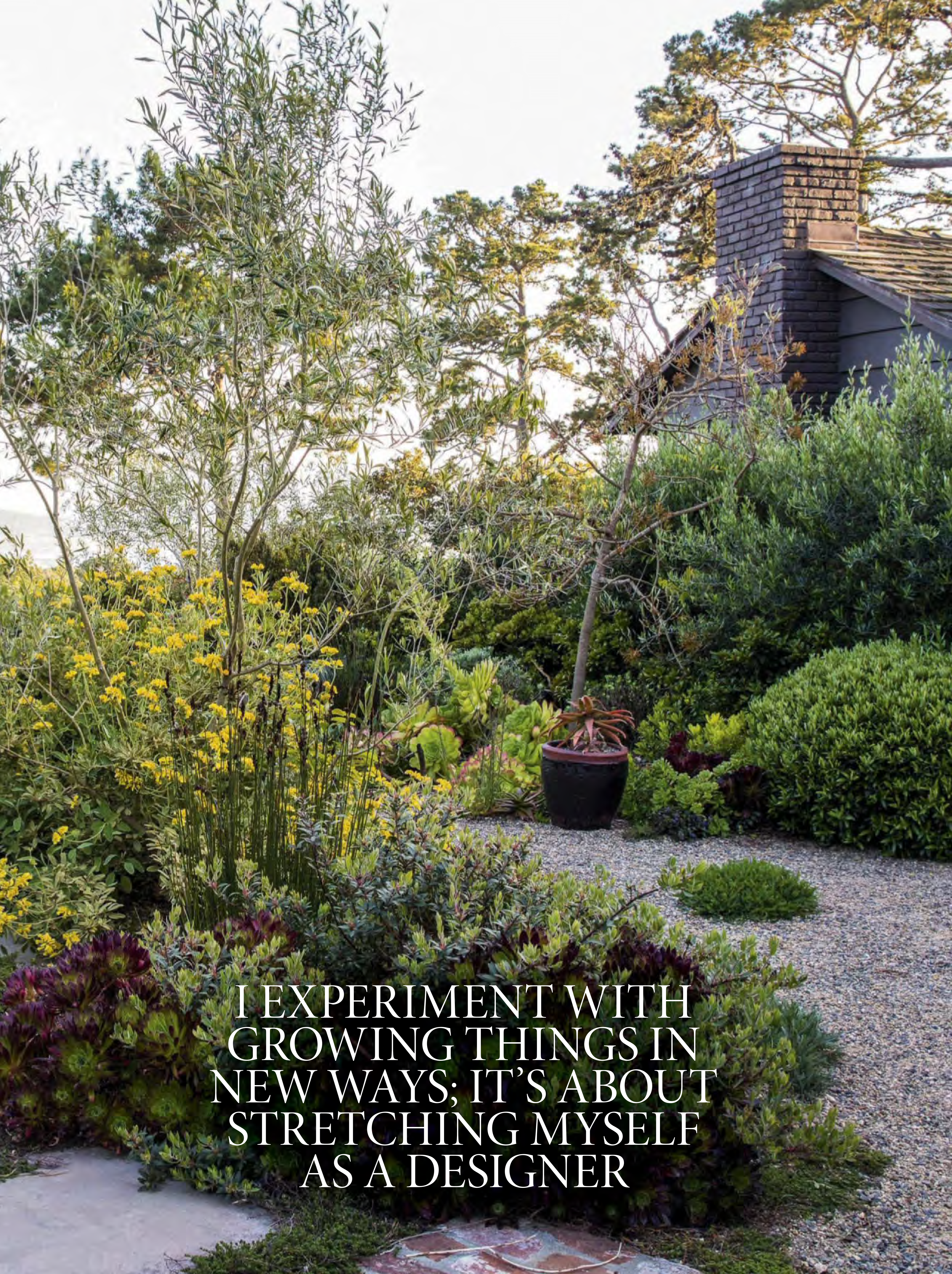
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.



The garden on the top level between the house and the guesthouse features concrete stepping stones that were poured in place, and have been interplanted with thyme. The view from here is of the Santa Lucia Range.



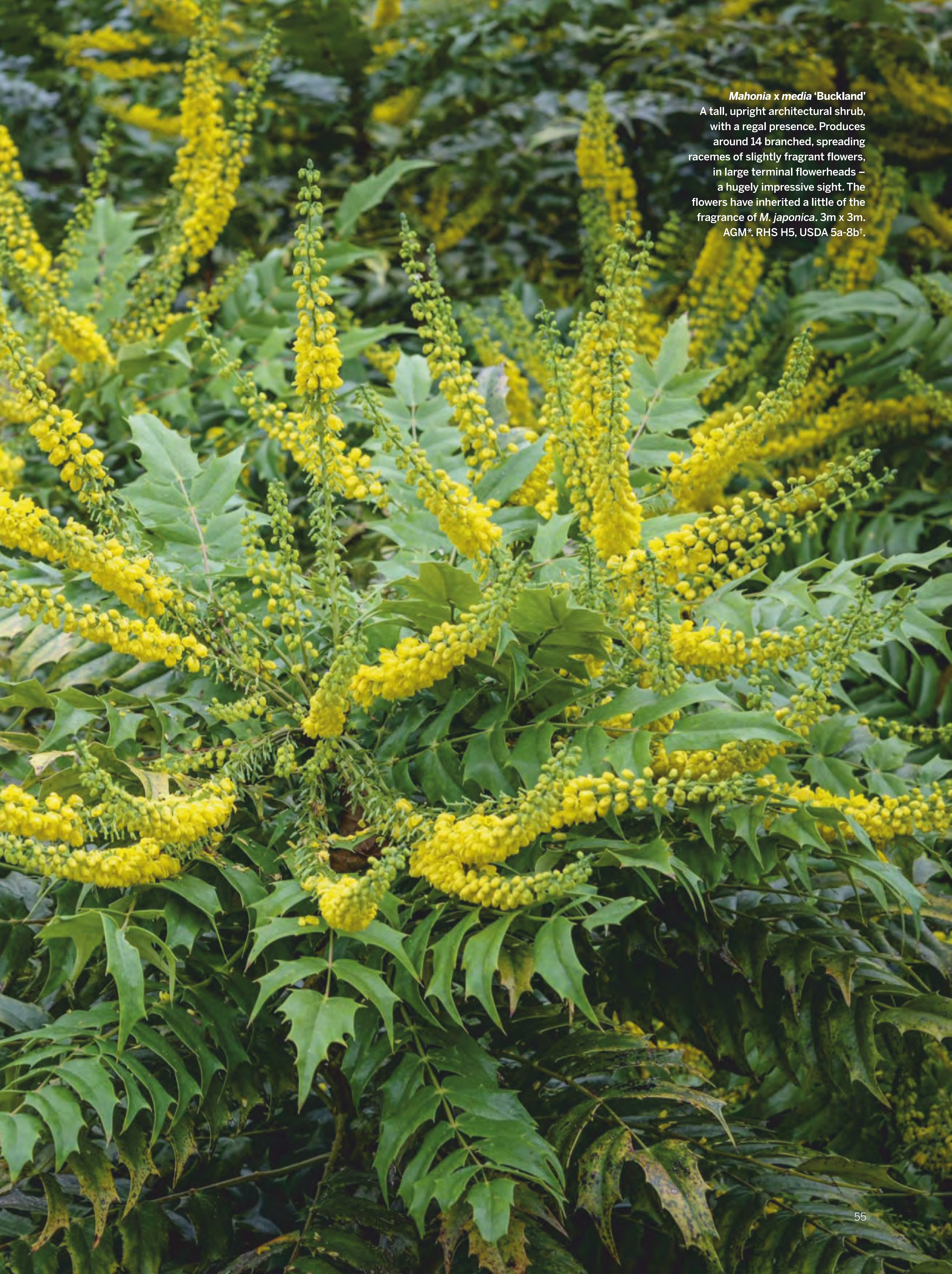
I EXPERIMENT WITH GROWING THINGS IN NEW WAYS; IT'S ABOUT STRETCHING MYSELF AS A DESIGNER

MAHONIA

Noted for their bold architecture and year-round colour, many mahonias have fragrant flowers in winter

WORDS **MATTHEW BIGGS**

JASON INGRAM



***Mahonia x media* 'Buckland'**
A tall, upright architectural shrub, with a regal presence. Produces around 14 branched, spreading racemes of slightly fragrant flowers, in large terminal flowerheads – a hugely impressive sight. The flowers have inherited a little of the fragrance of *M. japonica*. 3m x 3m. AGM*. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b†.

The most architectural forms of *Mahonia* are widely planted for their bold, primeval appearance and their flowers, which appear on long racemes from a central ruff of spiny leaves in autumn and winter followed by clusters of long finger-like projections of dark-purple berries. Others are more shrub like with short congested racemes; the leaves often turn red in cold weather. When the plants we now know as *Mahonia* were first introduced to cultivation they were included in the genus *Berberis* where several botanists now think they should return. The name *Mahonia* was introduced in 1818 when the botanist Thomas Nuttall renamed the species *Berberis aquifolium* as *Mahonia aquifolium*; today *Mahonia* includes around 70 species, divided into two main groups: Orientales from Asia and Occidentales from Central and North America.

Two species *M. japonica* and *M. oiwakensis* subsp. *lomarifolia*, both excellent garden plants in their own right, have been hybridised in several locations, at different times, creating *M.* x *media*. The best named forms, are regularly planted in large parks and gardens, including the successful selections *M.* x *media* 'Charity'. This was one of three selections (the others were 'Faith' and 'Hope') chosen in the early 1950s by Sir Eric Savill, Keeper of the Gardens at the Crown Estate, Windsor, and his head gardener Hope Findlay, from a line of seedlings growing in the Surrey nursery of Messrs LR Russell. The seedlings had been bought from the Slieve Donard Nursery in Northern Ireland, which also produced another *M.* x *media* cultivar with similar attributes but more upright racemes named 'Winter Sun'.

Two more *M.* x *media* cultivars appeared as the result of hybridisation by Lionel Fortescue at The Garden House in Buckland Monachorum in Devon. Of around 200 seedlings that germinated, only five were retained. The most outstanding with an imposing inflorescence up to 70cm across, composed of 13 or 14 numerously branched racemes was named 'Buckland'. Lionel Fortescue gave another of his seedlings to The Savill Garden, which also proved to be an outstanding selection with dense sheaves of erect, highly branched racemes of fragrant flowers, up to 40cm long, and was named 'Lionel Fortescue' in his honour.

Several garden-worthy cultivars have also arrived from the USA, including *M.* 'Arthur Menzies', a chance hybrid selected in 1964 at the University of Washington Arboretum. In 1961 the supervisor of plant accessions at San Francisco's Strybing Arboretum, Arthur Menzies, had sent seedlings from his garden to Washington Park Arboretum. After growing these seedlings on for a year, staff at the arboretum noticed that one of the plants had foliage more reminiscent of *M. bealei*, which was more cold hardy than the other parent, *M. oiwakensis* subsp. *lomarifolia*. Arboretum staff suspected this to be a hybrid, a fact confirmed a few years later when cold temperatures in December killed the other seedlings but left the mystery plant almost intact.

Another spontaneous hybrid *M.* x *lindsayae* 'Cantab' appeared among *M. siamensis* seed sent by Nancy Lindsay from Jardin Serre de la Madone in Menton, France (previously home to Lawrence Johnston), to Cambridge University Botanic Garden. In 1964, the Garden's taxonomist, Peter Yeo, noticed one was not the species but an obvious hybrid between *M. siamensis* and *M. japonica* (which is now thought to be the same species as *M. bealei*). He named this hybrid *M.* x *lindsayae* in honour of Nancy Lindsay and gave it the cultivar name 'Cantab' after the university. Although *M. siamensis* is tender, 'Cantab' has proven to be hardier, though it still needs some shelter.

Whether chance seedlings or intentional hybrids, mahonias never fail to please, especially in these dark, cold winter months, when they contribute to the garden in both flower and fragrance. ❑

• Author Matthew Biggs is a Kew-trained gardener, TV presenter and the author of several books. He is also a regular panellist on BBC Radio 4's *Gardeners' Question Time*. His recommendations for the best mahonias continue over the next five pages.

PLANT PROFILE

What A genus of around 70 species of woody shrubs in the family Berberidaceae. In the past they have been included in the genus *Berberis*. Commonly known as Oregon grape or holly grape, they have attractive, ornamental dark-purple fruits with a grey bloom that are loved by birds. The flowers are also a valuable source of nectar.

Origins The Himalayas. east and southeast Asia and Central and North America.

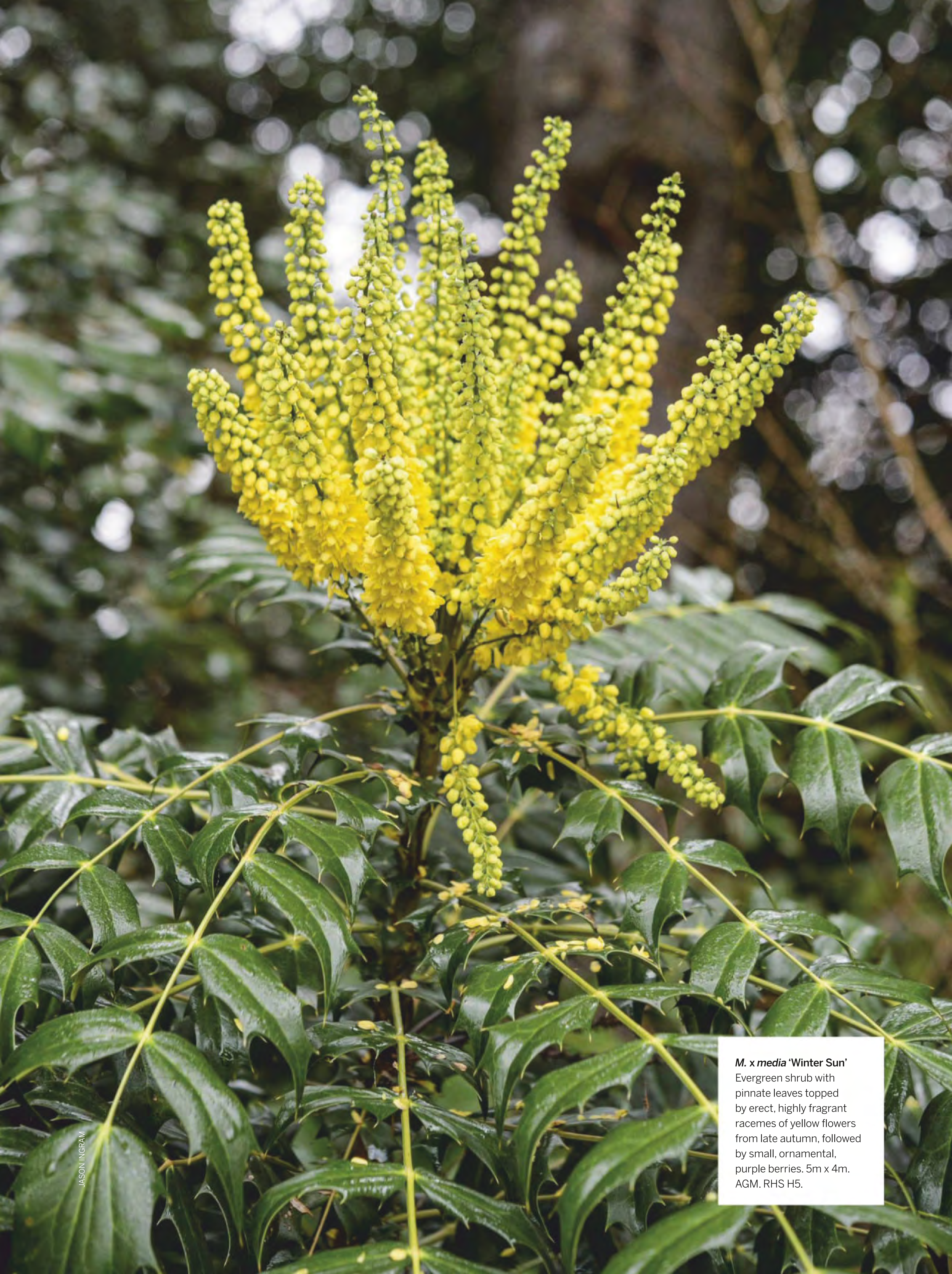
Season Planted for their bold architectural foliage and form all year round, with bright, sometimes fragrant flowers from autumn to spring. Many have colourful young spring growth.

Size Variable; from low, suckering groundcover to tall, multi-stemmed specimen plants over 3m in height.

Conditions Sunshine or part shade in organic-rich, moisture-retentive, free-draining soil of any kind, including chalk.

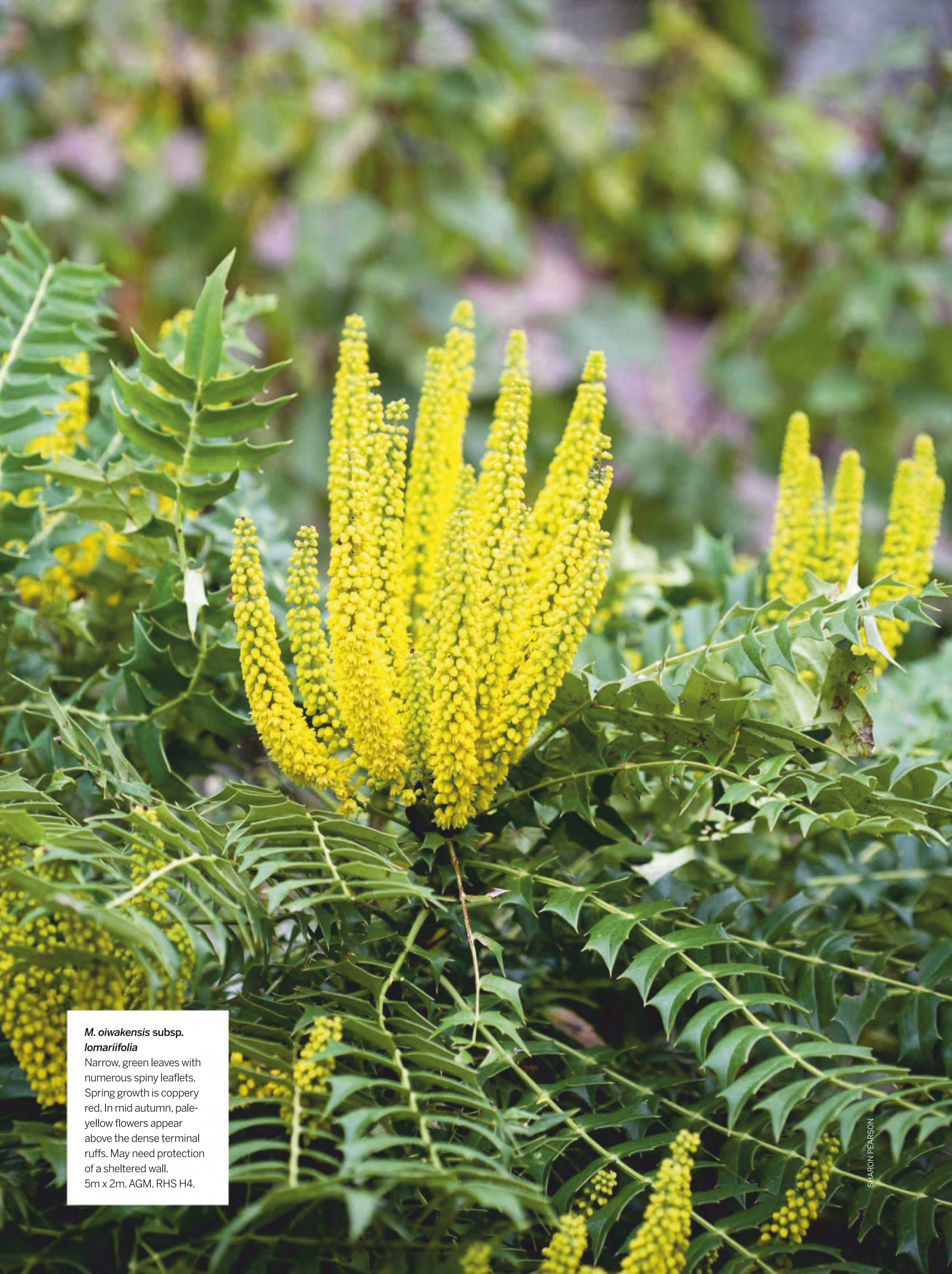
Hardiness Almost all are fully hardy.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
[†]Hardiness ratings given where available.



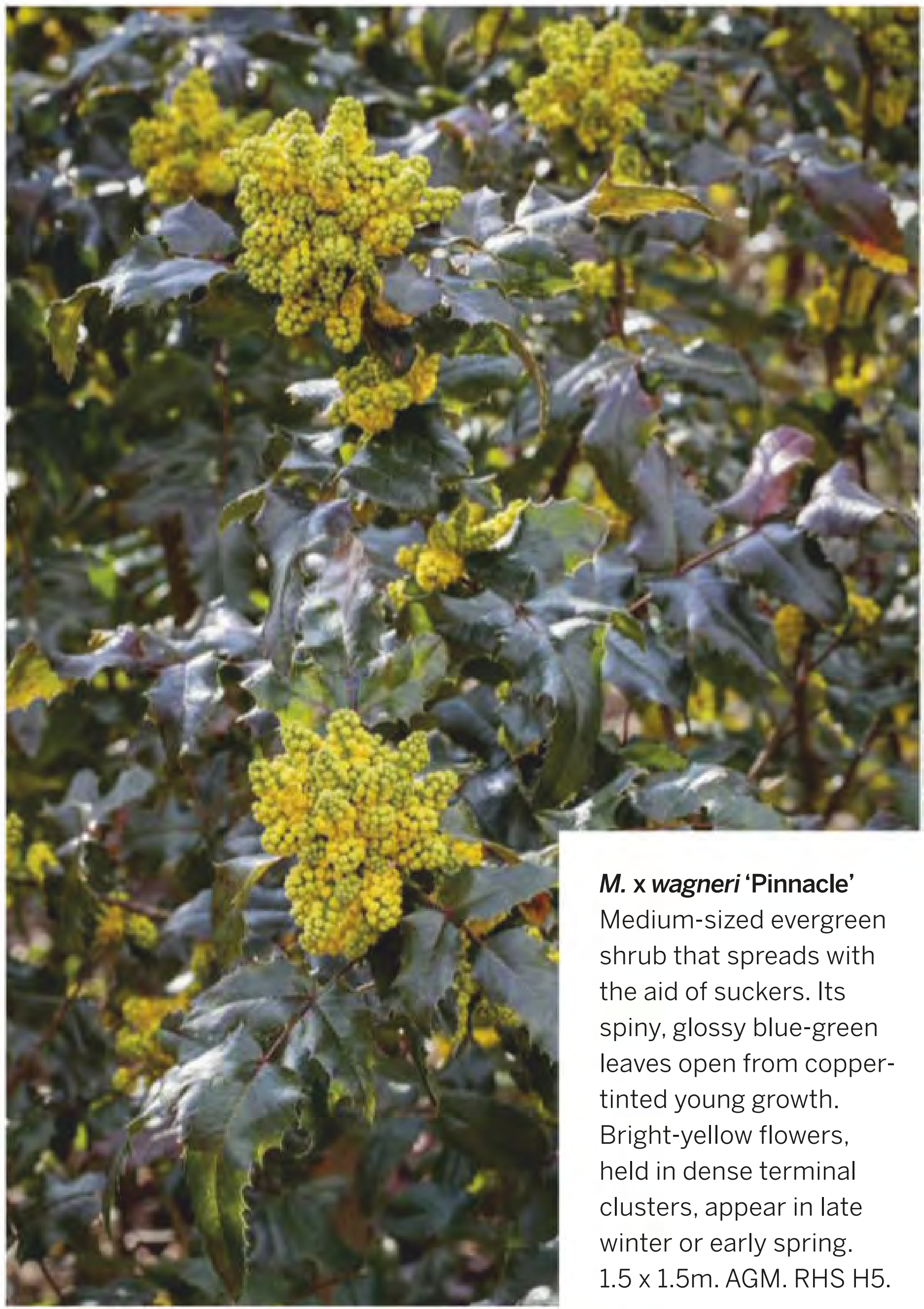
***M.* x *media* 'Winter Sun'**
Evergreen shrub with pinnate leaves topped by erect, highly fragrant racemes of yellow flowers from late autumn, followed by small, ornamental, purple berries. 5m x 4m. AGM. RHS H5.

JASON INGRAM

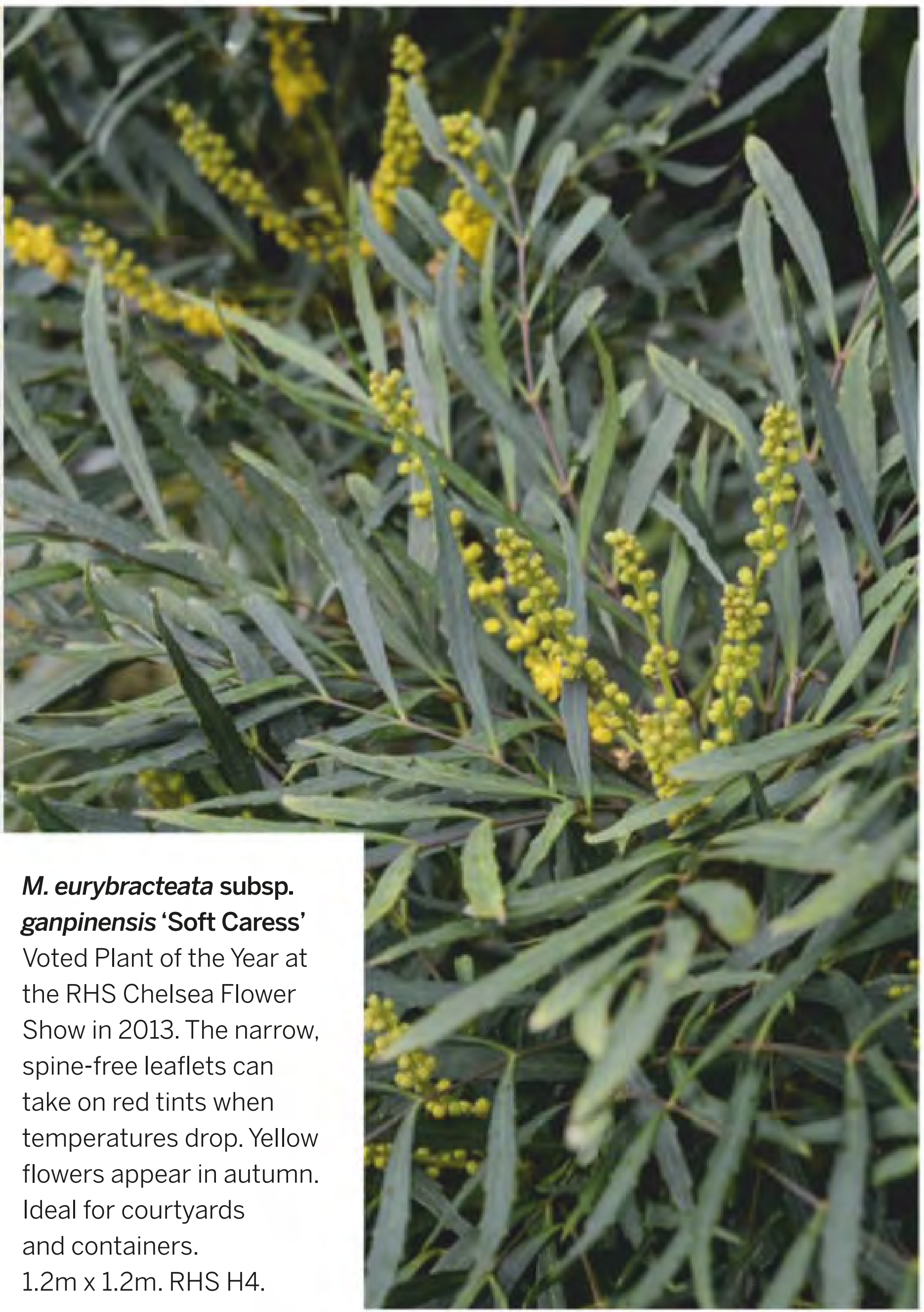


M. oiwakensis* subsp. *lomariifolia
Narrow, green leaves with numerous spiny leaflets. Spring growth is coppery red. In mid autumn, pale-yellow flowers appear above the dense terminal ruffs. May need protection of a sheltered wall.
5m x 2m. AGM. RHS H4.

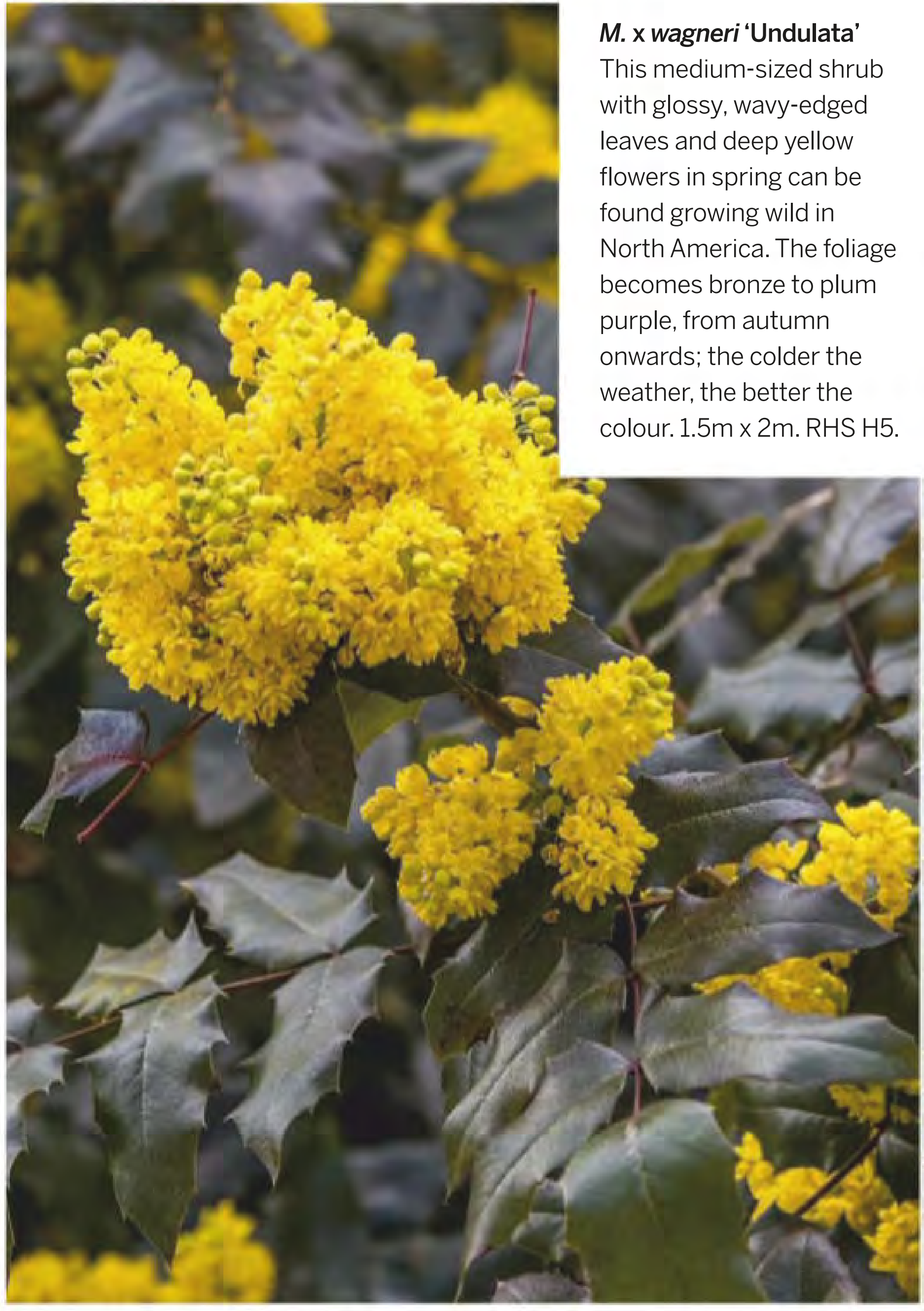
SHARON PEARSON



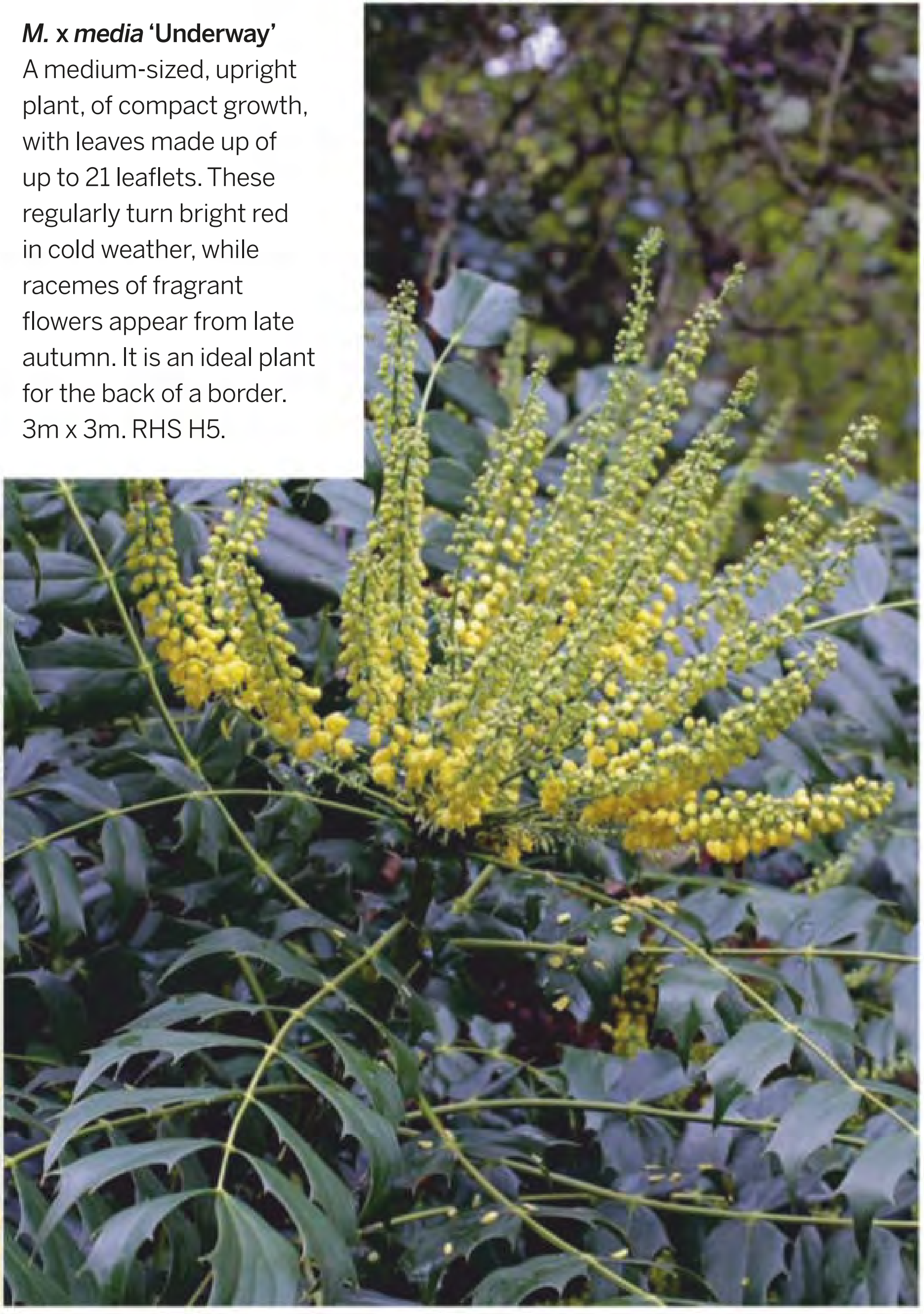
M. x *wagneri* 'Pinnacle'
Medium-sized evergreen shrub that spreads with the aid of suckers. Its spiny, glossy blue-green leaves open from copper-tinted young growth. Bright-yellow flowers, held in dense terminal clusters, appear in late winter or early spring. 1.5 x 1.5m. AGM. RHS H5.



***M. eurybracteata* subsp. *ganpinensis* 'Soft Caress'**
Voted Plant of the Year at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2013. The narrow, spine-free leaflets can take on red tints when temperatures drop. Yellow flowers appear in autumn. Ideal for courtyards and containers. 1.2m x 1.2m. RHS H4.

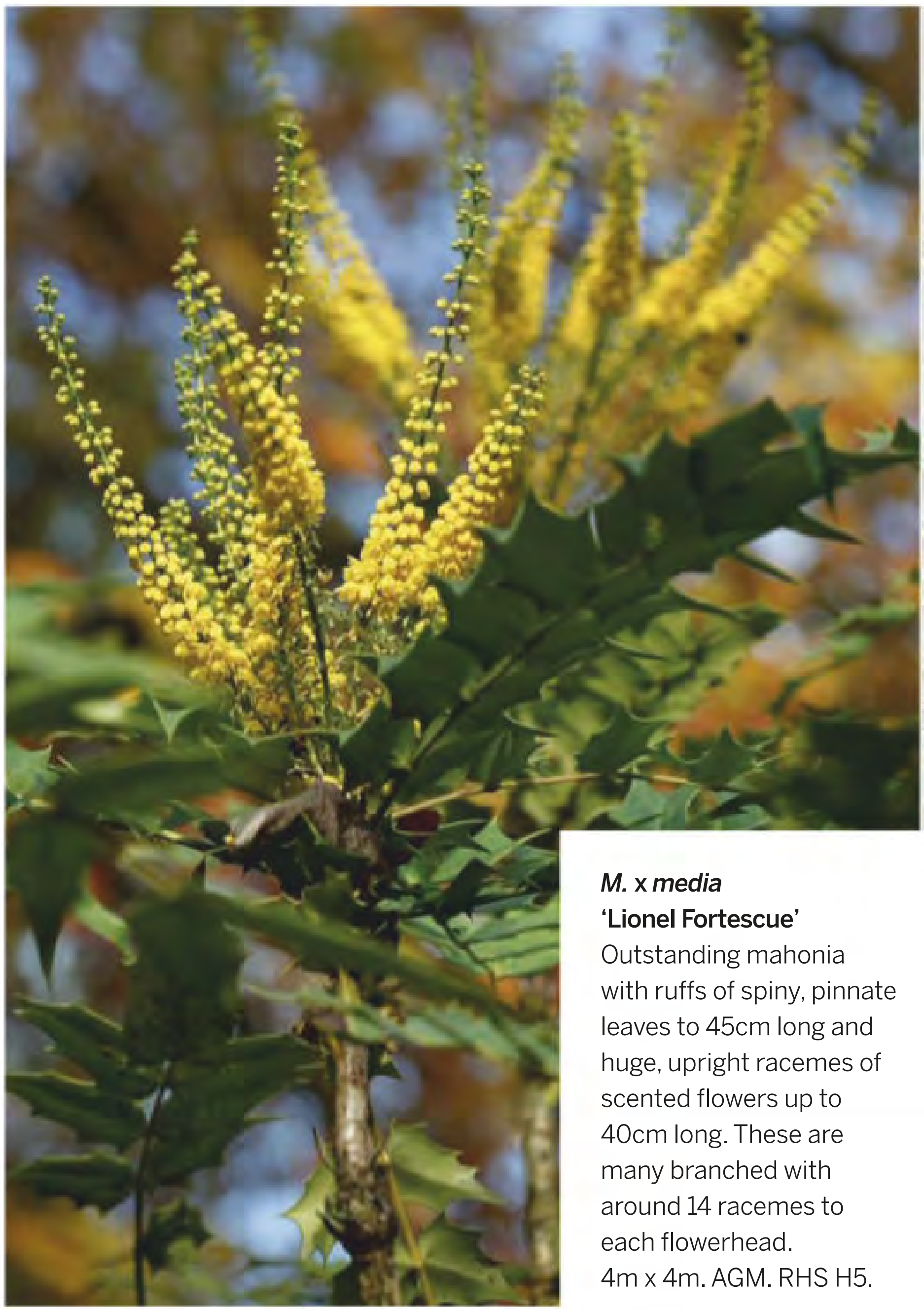


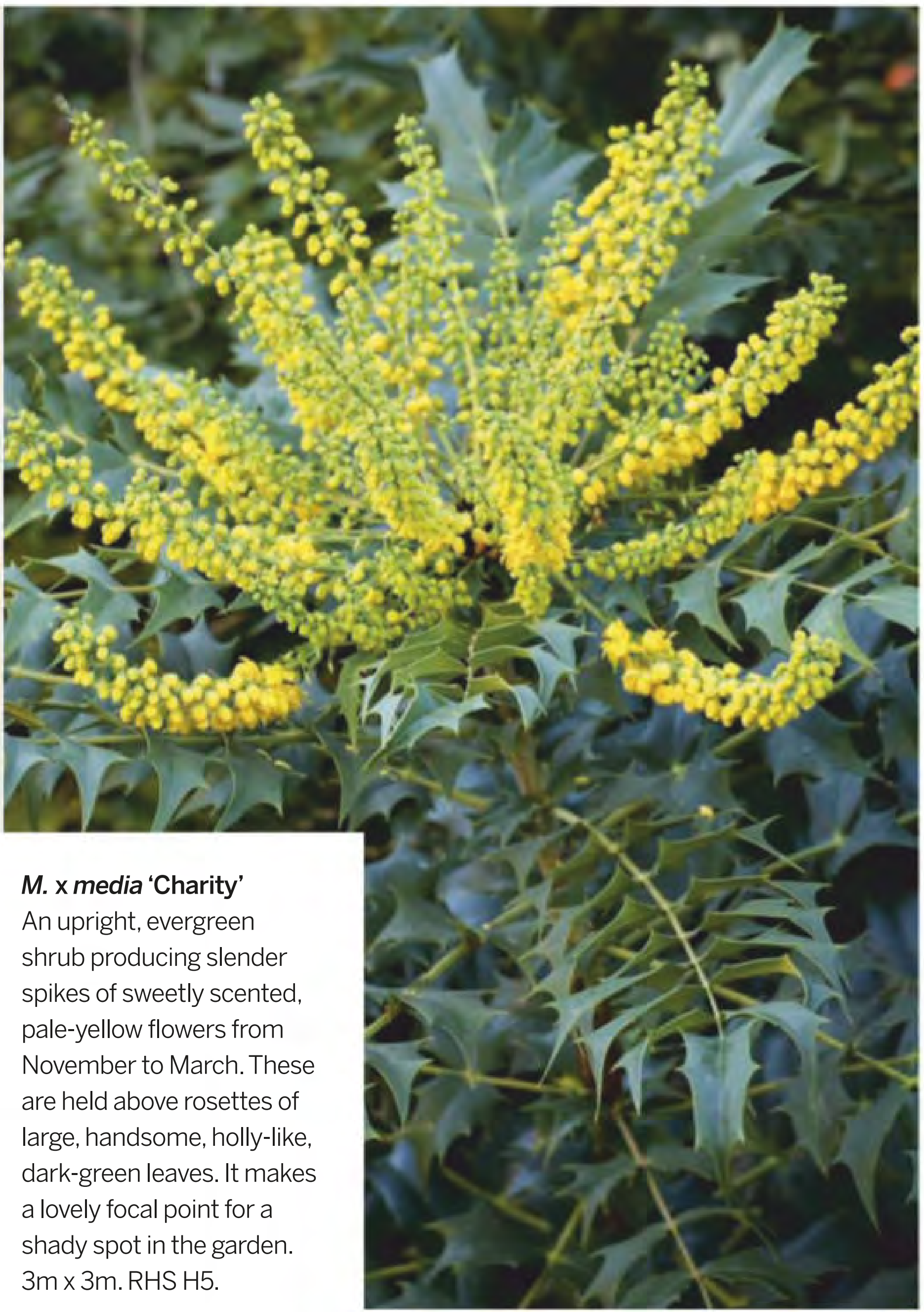
M. x *wagneri* 'Undulata'
This medium-sized shrub with glossy, wavy-edged leaves and deep yellow flowers in spring can be found growing wild in North America. The foliage becomes bronze to plum purple, from autumn onwards; the colder the weather, the better the colour. 1.5m x 2m. RHS H5.



M. x *media* 'Underway'
A medium-sized, upright plant, of compact growth, with leaves made up of up to 21 leaflets. These regularly turn bright red in cold weather, while racemes of fragrant flowers appear from late autumn. It is an ideal plant for the back of a border. 3m x 3m. RHS H5.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: FIONA MCLEOD / GAP PHOTOS; JASON INGRAM; MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / GAP PHOTOS; DAVE ZUBRASKI / GAP PHOTOS



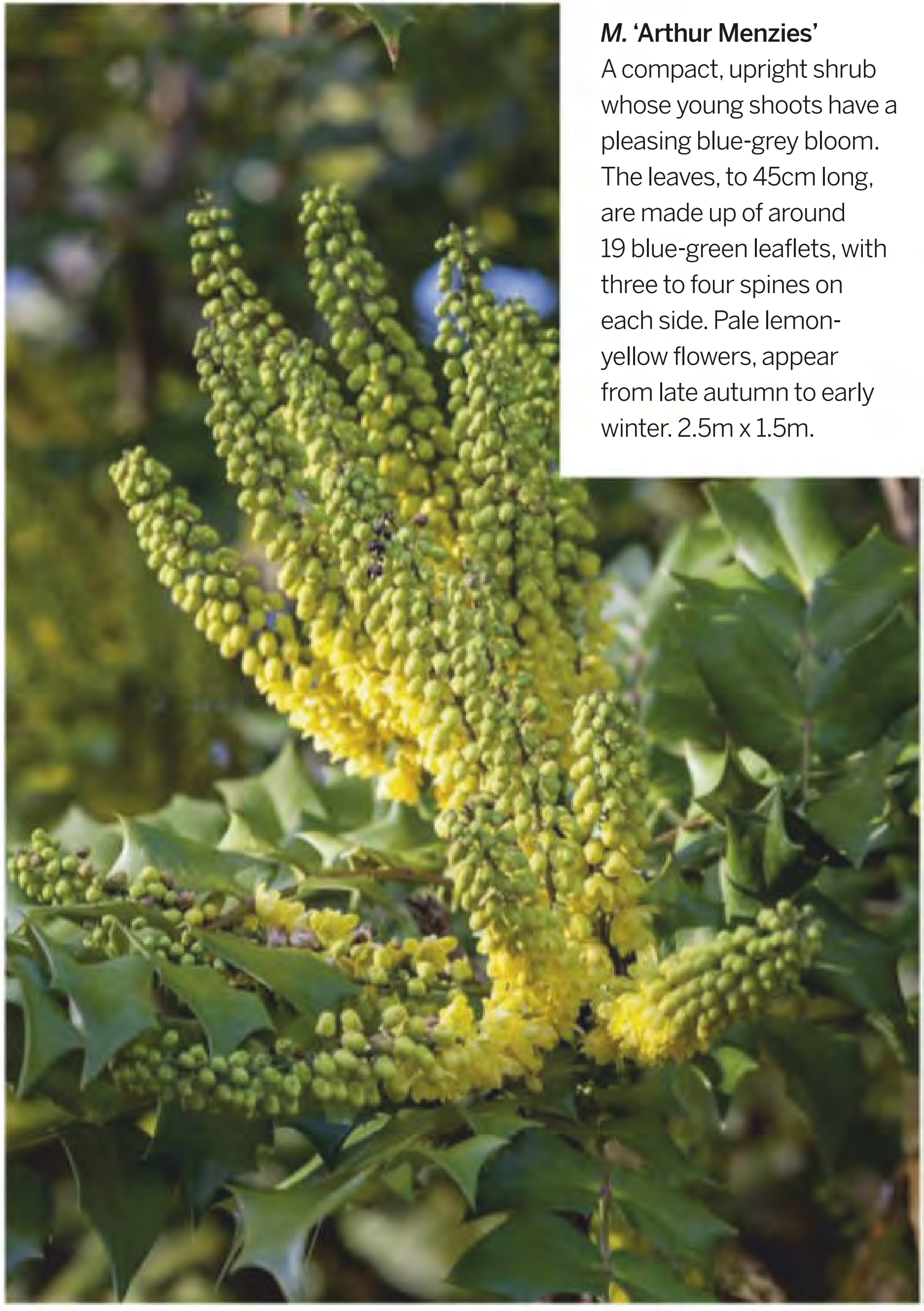


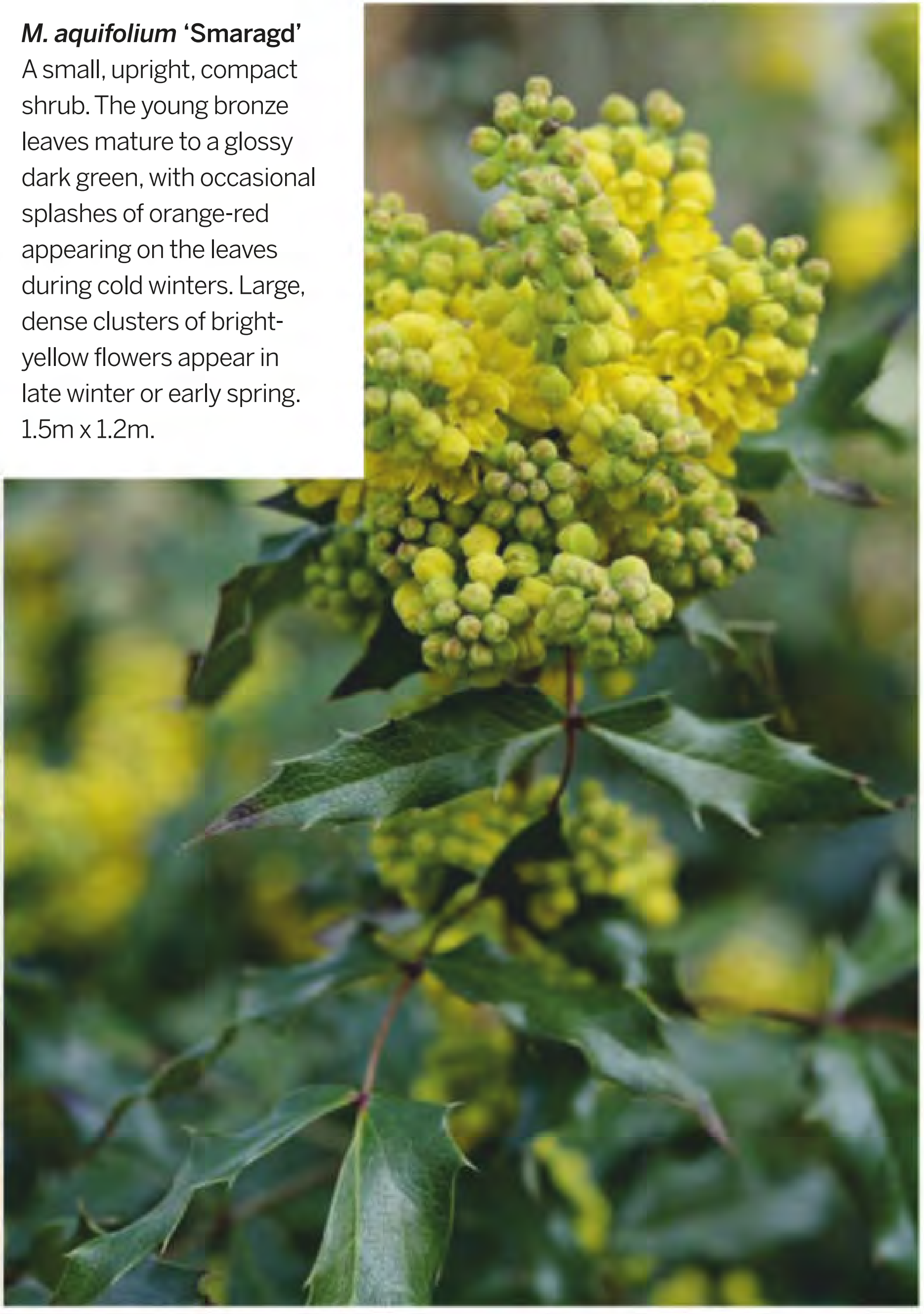
M.* x *media
'Lionel Fortescue'
Outstanding mahonia with ruffs of spiny, pinnate leaves to 45cm long and huge, upright racemes of scented flowers up to 40cm long. These are many branched with around 14 racemes to each flowerhead.
4m x 4m. AGM. RHS H5.

***M.* 'Arthur Menzies'**
A compact, upright shrub whose young shoots have a pleasing blue-grey bloom. The leaves, to 45cm long, are made up of around 19 blue-green leaflets, with three to four spines on each side. Pale lemon-yellow flowers, appear from late autumn to early winter. 2.5m x 1.5m.

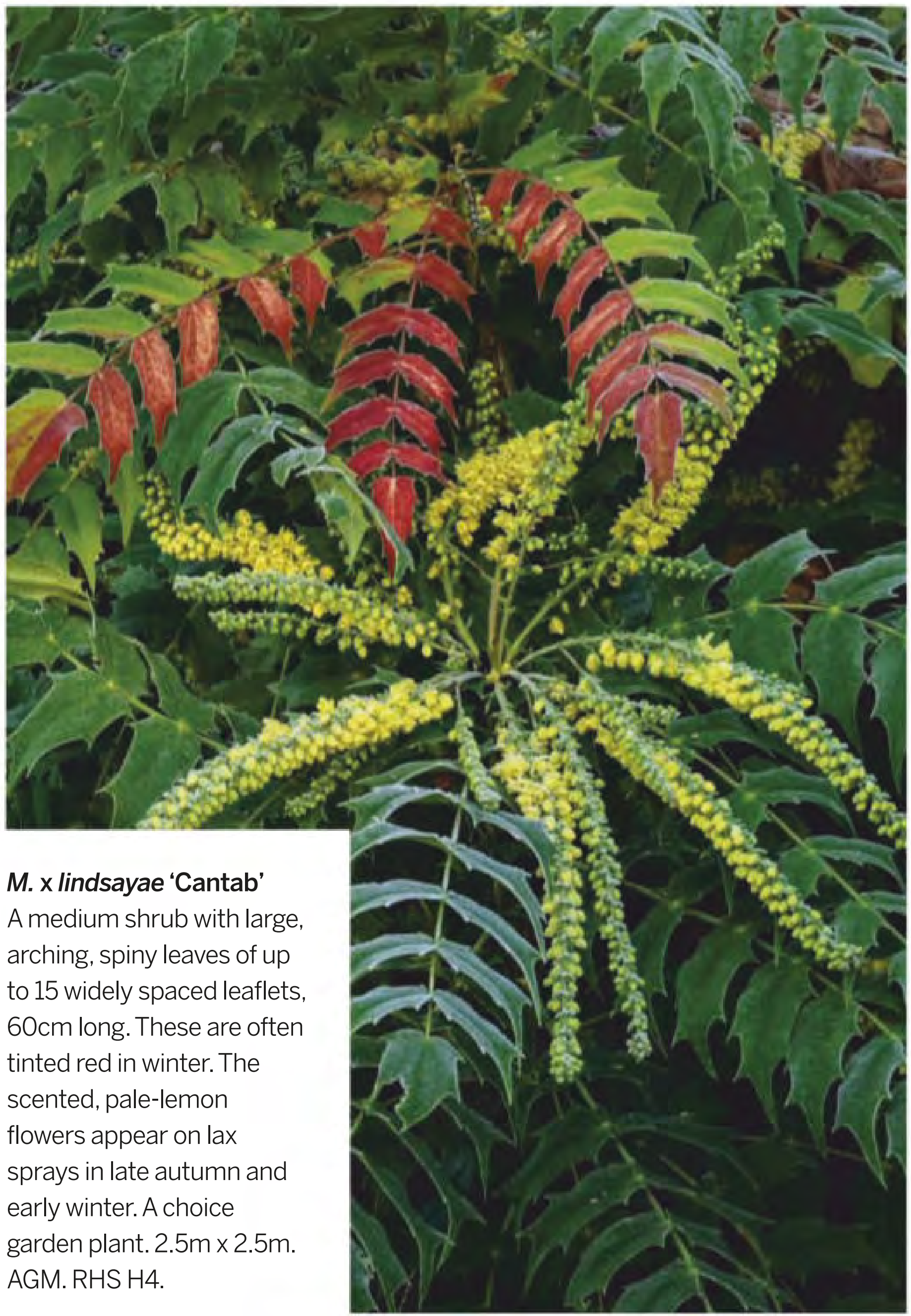
***M.* x *media* 'Charity'**
An upright, evergreen shrub producing slender spikes of sweetly scented, pale-yellow flowers from November to March. These are held above rosettes of large, handsome, holly-like, dark-green leaves. It makes a lovely focal point for a shady spot in the garden.
3m x 3m. RHS H5.

***M. aquifolium* 'Smaragd'**
A small, upright, compact shrub. The young bronze leaves mature to a glossy dark green, with occasional splashes of orange-red appearing on the leaves during cold winters. Large, dense clusters of bright-yellow flowers appear in late winter or early spring.
1.5m x 1.2m.



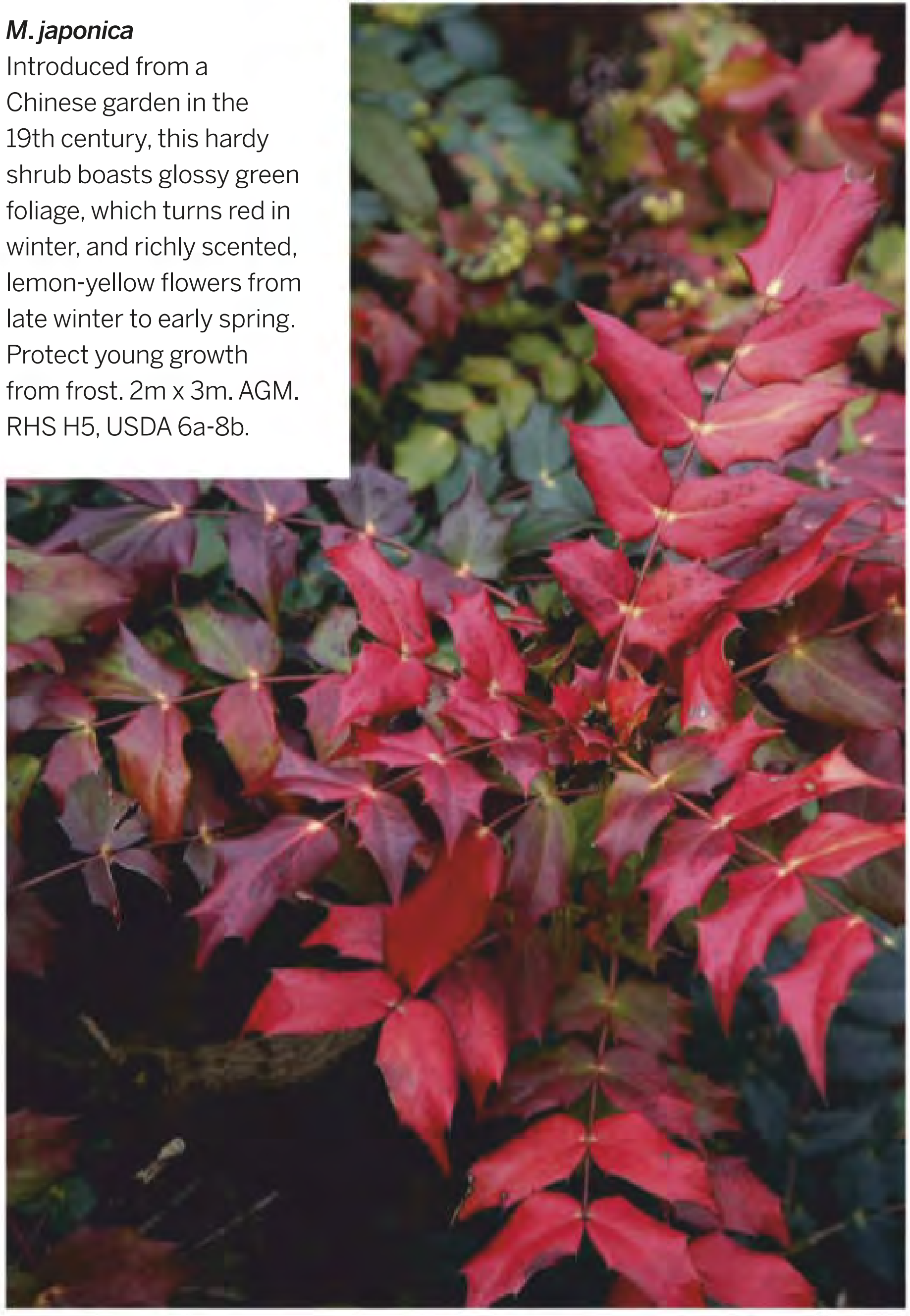


CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JAN SMITH / GAP PHOTOS; JONATHAN BUCKLEY / GAP PHOTOS; JASON INGRAM; MARK BOLTON / GAP PHOTOS



***M.* x *lindsayae* 'Cantab'**
A medium shrub with large, arching, spiny leaves of up to 15 widely spaced leaflets, 60cm long. These are often tinted red in winter. The scented, pale-lemon flowers appear on lax sprays in late autumn and early winter. A choice garden plant. 2.5m x 2.5m. AGM. RHS H4.

M. japonica
Introduced from a Chinese garden in the 19th century, this hardy shrub boasts glossy green foliage, which turns red in winter, and richly scented, lemon-yellow flowers from late winter to early spring. Protect young growth from frost. 2m x 3m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 6a-8b.



FROM TOP: NICOLA STOCKEN / GAP PHOTOS; REX MAY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Cultivation

Mahonias thrive in sun or part shade, in acidic or alkaline soils that are fertile and well-drained. The larger species and hybrids are hungry plants, so improve the soil with well-rotted organic matter before planting, then apply a 5-7cm mulch of well-rotted garden compost or manure around the base of the plant in spring until plants become established. Over time, the stems of some *M. oiwakensis* subsp. *lomariifolia*, *M. japonica*, *M.* x *media* and cultivars, and *M.* x *wagneri* and cultivars become leggy and bare but respond to hard pruning. Cut back the stems by two thirds in March after flowering, then feed, mulch and water well to encourage regrowth. They will re-flower one or two years later.

Good companions

Most *Mahonia* cultivars make good middle to back-of-border plants or specimen plants. Shorter forms, including those described as groundcover, can be brought forward towards the edge of the border or used to blend woodland plantings with more formal design elements. Bear in mind their spiny nature when placing these plants to avoid hurting children or pets. Their spikes of flowers add welcome scent and colour at time of year when such virtues are valued. Place them in sheltered positions so the scent can be appreciated, in the corner of a walled garden where the fragrance collects or close to a door. Their evergreen foliage and structural qualities make them ideal for contrasting with other plants such as coloured-stemmed *Cornus*, particularly orange-stemmed cultivars, such as *Cornus sanguinea* 'Anny's Winter Orange' or 'Midwinter Fire' and white-stemmed *Rubus thibetanus* and *R. cockburnianus* underplanted with snowdrops, winter aconites or other winter- and spring-flowering bulbs or hellebores.

The genus

The genus was named in 1818 by Thomas Nuttall (1786-1859), an English botanist and writer who worked in the USA from 1808 until 1841. He named it for Bernard McMahon (1775-1816) an Irish horticulturist who emigrated to the USA, eventually settling in Philadelphia. In 1796, McMahon established a nursery and seed shop in the city, run by his wife, which became a meeting point for the prominent horticulturists and botanists of his day. Some of the plants McMahon cultivated were grown from seeds sent to him by keen gardener and third President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson. One of these was the *Berberis aquifolium*, collected by Lewis and Clark on their famous exploration of western America 1804-06, which shortly after McMahon's death would be renamed *Mahonia aquifolium* in his honour. He also provided Jefferson with many plants for his garden at Monticello in Virginia.

Where to see and buy

- **Ashwood Nurseries**
  Ashwood Lower Lane,
  Ashwood, Kingswinford,
  West Midlands DY6 0AE.
  Tel 01384 401996,
  ashwoodnurseries.com
- **Burncoose Nurseries**
  Gwennap, Redruth,
  Cornwall TR16 6BJ.
  Tel 01209 860316,
  burncoose.co.uk
- **Cambridge University Botanic Garden**
  1 Brookside,
  Cambridge CB2 1JE.
  Tel 01223 336265,
  botanic.cam.ac.uk
- **The Place for Plants**
  East Bergholt Place,
  Suffolk CO7 6UP.
  Tel 01206 299224,
  placeforplants.co.uk
- **The Savill Garden and Valley Gardens**
  Windsor Great Park,
  Windsor, Berkshire SL4 2HT.
  Tel 01753 860222,
  windsorgreatpark.co.uk

HORTICULTURAL WHO'S WHO

MIKE NELHAMS

The tiny wind-lashed island of Tresco in the Isles of Scilly seems an improbable home for a world-class subtropical garden, and its gregarious globe-trotting curator, Mike Nelhams

WORDS AMBRA EDWARDS PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

When I pitch up at Tresco's celebrated Abbey Garden, established in the 19th century around the ruins of a Benedictine abbey, curator Mike Nelhams is not at his desk. Nor can he be found among the labyrinthine paths that wind among the countless botanical treasures of this subtropical garden, or even up a tree. Mike's first permanent job here was as an arborist, though these days he leaves the tree work to his long-serving head gardener Andrew Lawson. As helicopter blades rattle and roar, sending red squirrels scattering, it becomes apparent that Mike is engaged in one of his many other jobs, as reserve air traffic controller, landing a naval rotorcraft on a square of green by the garden gate. Multi-tasking, he explains, is an essential part of island life. Mike is also fire officer, local councillor and port facilities security officer for the many cruise ships that dock at Tresco. These are essential for the survival of the garden, as only the most determined domestic visitors seem to venture the 30 miles beyond the tip of Cornwall to explore the Scilly Isles. Mike has refined group visits to a fine art, so that as many as 200 visitors at a time can be led through the myriad enclosures and terraces of the garden without any sense of overcrowding.

> THE GREAT FREEZE OF 1987 REDUCED THE GARDEN TO SOMETHING VERY LIKE STEWED RHUBARB. I HAD TO SEE IT AS AN OPPORTUNITY

He has also taken to life on the ocean wave himself, spending most winters lecturing on cruise ships or leading garden tours. (Spring sees annual exchange visits with La Mortola, the famous botanical garden on the Italian Riviera, while in summer he is busy judging for the RHS.) He also travels to California, Argentina, South Africa and New Zealand, spreading the word about Tresco, and visiting the countries where many of his plants originate and observing them in their natural habitats, Mike enhances his knowledge of their needs, makes invaluable contacts with other gardens, and finds new ways of developing the collection.

Mike credits garden writer Ursula Buchan with bringing him to Tresco. They were students at Wisley, and Ursula, worried that she might not make the grade for a placement at Kew, numbered Tresco among her options for a Plan B. The more she talked about it, the more Mike became convinced it should be his Plan A. He had fond memories of the island from family holidays, recollecting with particular warmth the beautiful daughter of the island shopkeeper. Isobel has now been his wife for 37 years.

Mike loved his student year on the island, despite rudimentary accommodation in an old potato store adjoining the island's generator. "My soup had ripples in it," recalls Mike, "because the table would shake so hard." After a week he no longer heard it, and he stayed on for another year and a half.

He then spent five years at High Beeches in Sussex, but in 1984 was invited to return to Tresco as head gardener. He was just 26, and didn't expect to stay forever. Island life isn't for everyone. There's only one shop, one pub, and a couple of restaurants geared to high-end tourists. There are no cars on the island, and the ferry to Penzance (and the nearest supermarket) takes three hours. In winter the population dwindles to around 150 people, and those winters are long and drear. You have to be able to rub along with other people and make your own entertainment. (That helicopter landing pad doubles as a driving range: Mike is a keen golfer.)

Above all, you have to be resourceful. Living out in the Atlantic is an elemental existence, at the mercy of the weather in a way that most of us never experience. Mike still remembers the great freeze of January 1987. "Nearly the entire garden was reduced to something very like stewed rhubarb." For three years he laboured to recover the garden, only for the 1990 hurricane to bring down the 100-year-old shelter belt and lay waste to his new plantings. Fortunately, he is a resolutely cheerful person: "I don't do depressed and demoralised and miserable – it's not in my nature. I had to see it as an opportunity, not a disaster."

Ever since, he has set about future-proofing the garden. He has planned a succession of shelter belts, and has built more variety into the collections – Tresco's display of plants from all Mediterranean regions is unique. And he is trying to put the garden on a sound financial footing without sacrificing its strong sense of identity and individuality – it's still very much a family garden.

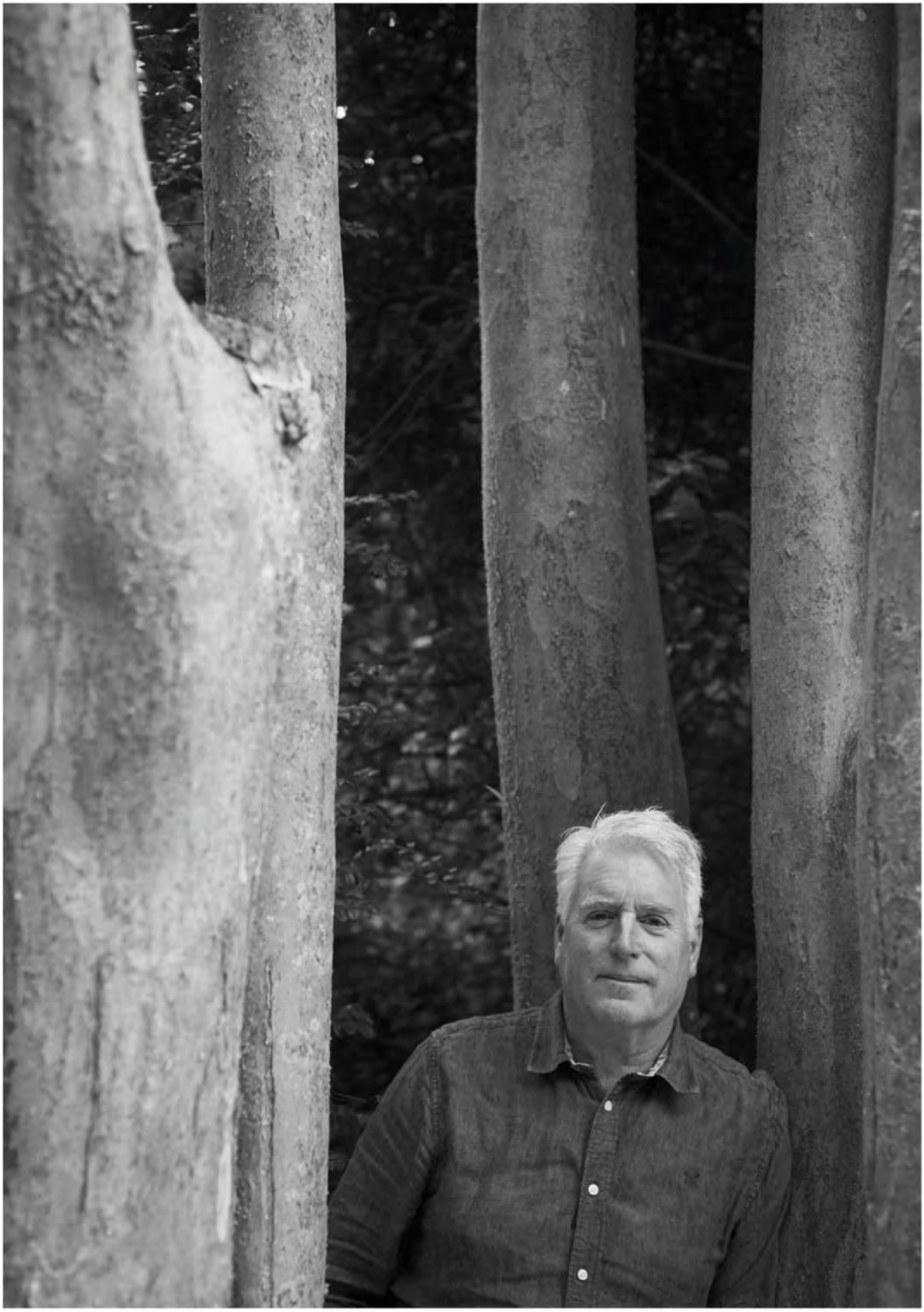
He is also starting to plan for his retirement. It will be a wrench to leave the island, but he is not down-hearted: there will be all the more time for travel. And, of course, a few extra rounds of golf. □

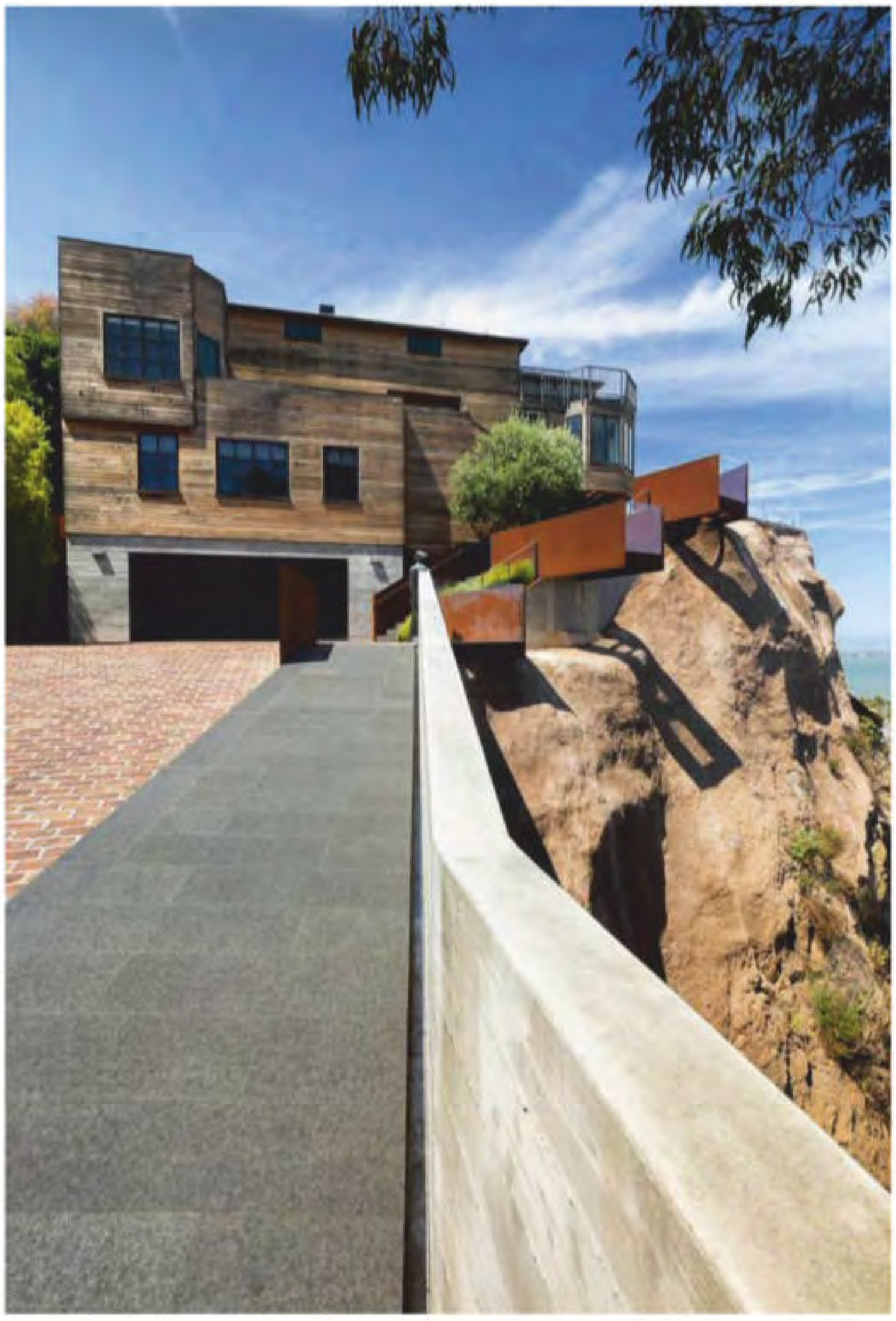
USEFUL INFORMATION

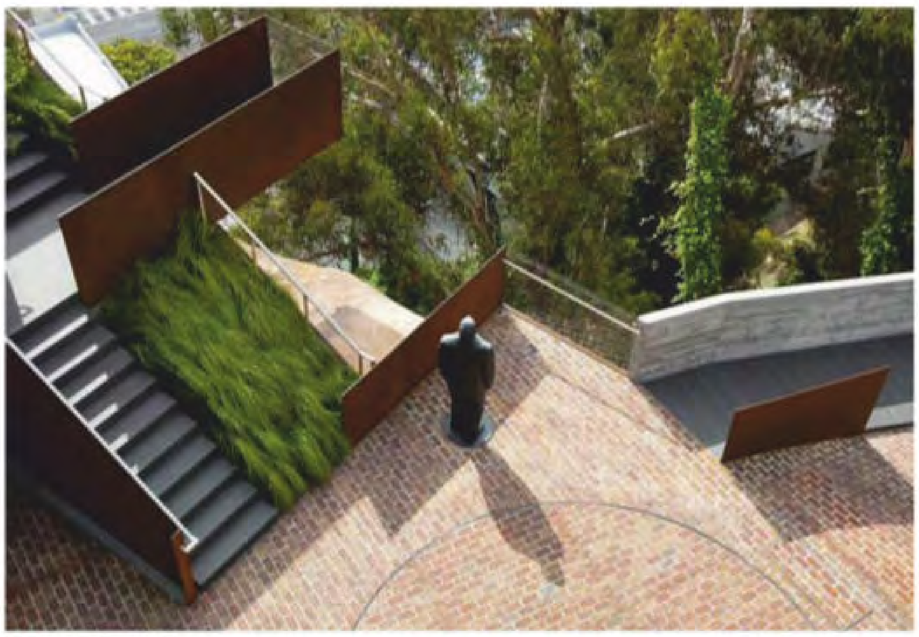
Tresco Abbey Garden, Tresco, Isles of Scilly, TR24 0QQ.
Tel 01720 422849, tresco.co.uk

In January Mike, head gardener Andrew and garden students complete the annual Tresco Abbey New Year flower count, a tradition dating back 150 years, to see what flowers are in bloom.

NEXT MONTH Adam White, president of the Landscape Institute.







IN BRIEF

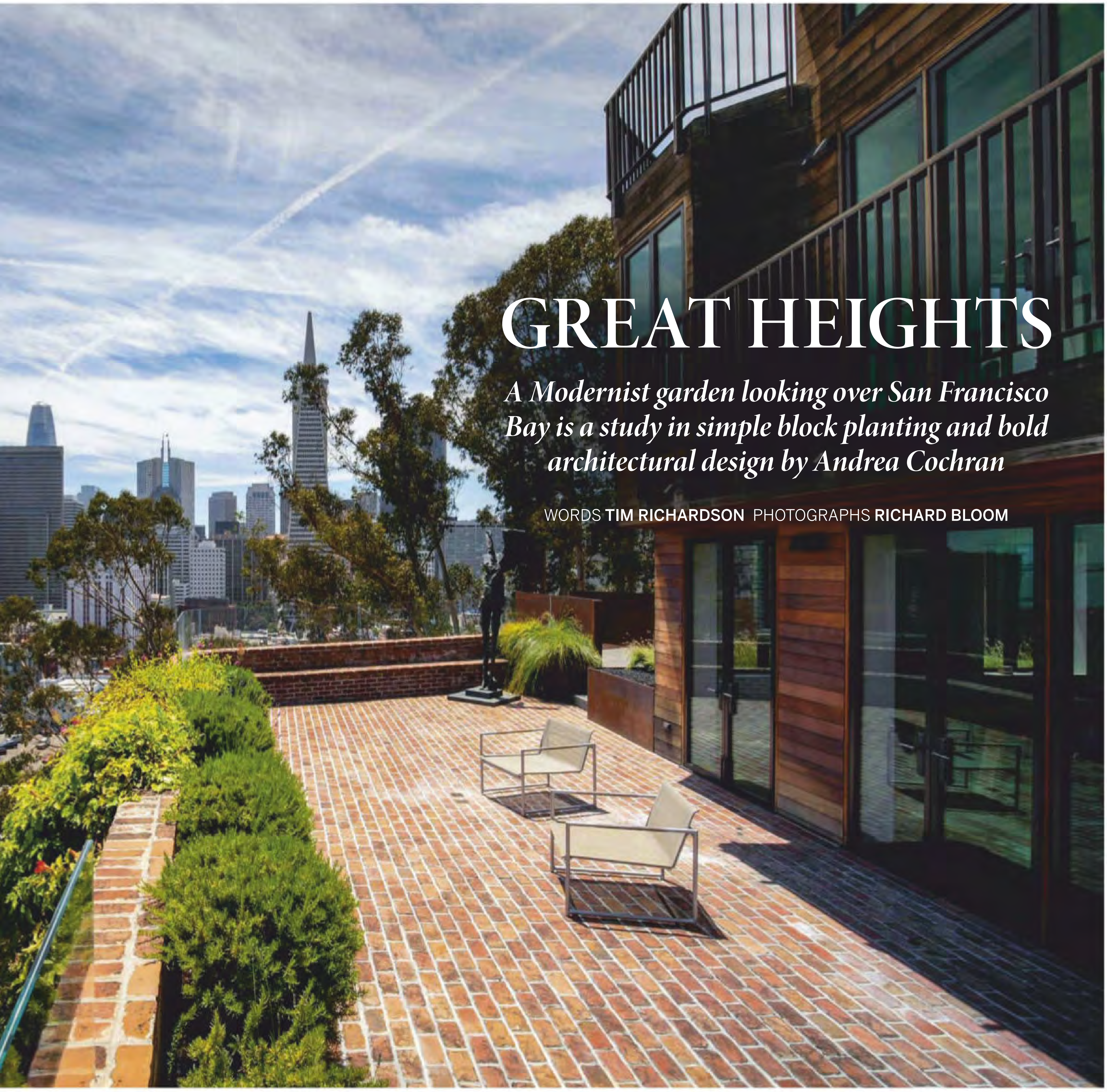
What Urban garden on a cliff edge.
Where San Francisco, USA.
Size 1,00 square metres.
Soil Light loam, mainly brought in.
Climate Mediterranean, with cool summers.
Hardiness zone USDA 10a.

Top Different materials create pleasing contrasts at this cliff-top site: cast concrete walls, black basalt pavers and the brick forecourt lead up to the cedar-shingled house, with Andrea Cochran's vertigo-inducing Corten steel overlooks poised at the edge of the abyss.

Above The geometric planes of the garden look good from many angles, including the near-vertical view from the top of the house.

A fine view across the city and its bay is not such an unusual asset when it comes to high-end houses in hilly San Francisco, but what this property offers is in a league of its own. For anyone who is prone to vertigo (like me), the steps up the side of the house, complete with protruding Corten steel and glass overlooks, appear daunting indeed. Cantilevered over the cliff edge, each overlook has a gridded base that ends with a glass panel, so the intrepid visitor has a view down the almost-vertical cliff face. Huge eucalyptus trees grow in abundance on the cliffs and then the eye travels on to the city, the docks, the downtown skyscrapers and, beyond, the bay itself, criss-crossed by ferries and bridges, with the former prison island of Alcatraz looming in the distance.

"Kids absolutely love the overlooks," says designer Andrea Cochran, so of course it is absolutely necessary for us to skip up the steps and 'walk the plank' until we are



GREAT HEIGHTS

A Modernist garden looking over San Francisco Bay is a study in simple block planting and bold architectural design by Andrea Cochran

WORDS **TIM RICHARDSON** PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD BLOOM**

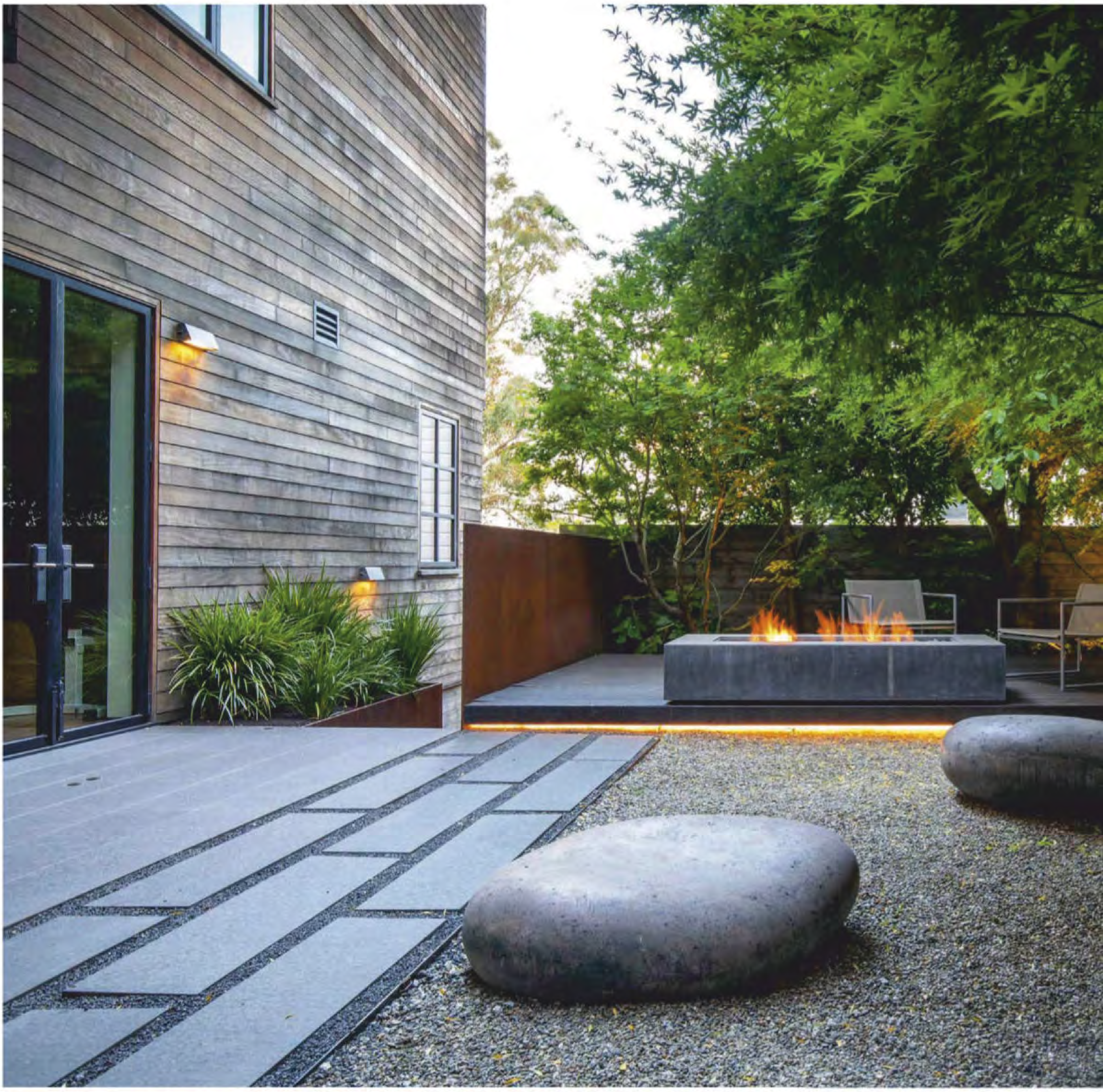
essentially hovering in mid-air above the abyss. Perhaps now would be a good time for Andrea to introduce me to the rest of the garden.

Cars have to climb a short but extremely steep driveway before coming to rest on the brick platform of the parking forecourt. The first thing you see on arrival is the garage, since the front door is several storeys above. “I wanted the experience of getting to the front door to be an interesting one,” Andrea explains – hence the dramatic overlooks that dominate the garden’s opening act.

A whimsical sculpture of a man gazing skywards – *Looking Up* by Jim Rennert – greets you at the foot of the steps, which only increases your sense of anticipation, while the smooth Corten steel planes of the overlooks create a sculptural tableau reminiscent of the monumental works of the American sculptor Richard Serra.

The overlooks also create framed views of the city beyond as you ascend the steps, which are flanked to one side by the acid green of a large block planting of *Lomandra* ▷

Above A generous brick terrace spans the bay-front of the house. Here it’s all about the view and about feeling part of the surroundings. The wide terrace looks out over the sprawling Bay Area of San Francisco and has incredible views out over the Oakland Bay Bridge. Planting has been kept simple with blocks of rosemary, lavender, plumbago, trumpet vine and ivy adorning the front wall.



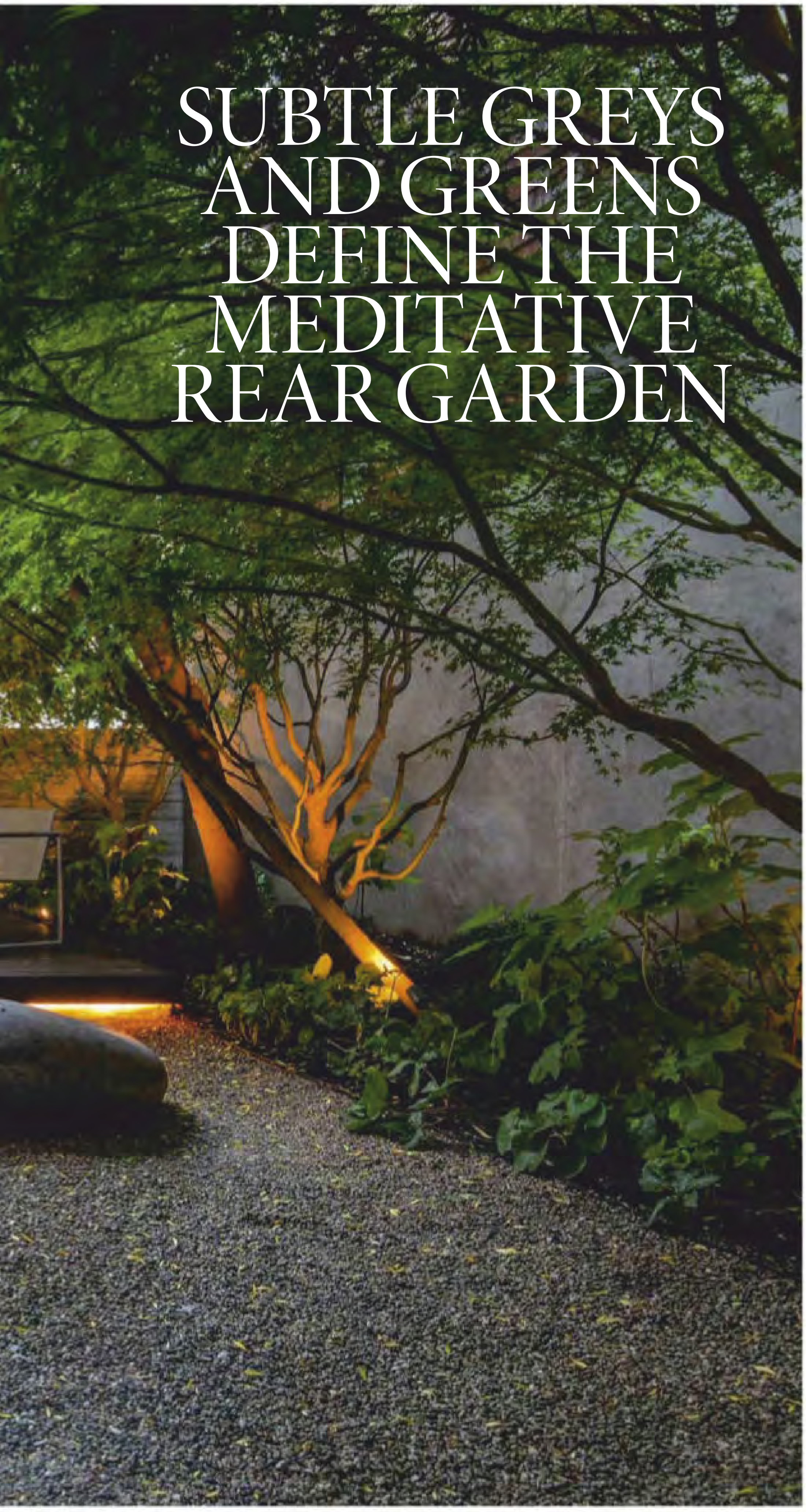
Above Complex textural interplay is always a keynote in Andrea Cochran's work, and here the different tones of gravel, basalt pavers, cedar shingles, Corten steel, fire, maple foliage, *Liriope muscari* (at left) and cast-concrete seat 'pebbles' all play a role.

▷ *longifolia* 'Breeze' at the foot of the steps, which is later replaced by blocks of the grass-like *Ophiopogon* higher up. The colour tones of these different foliage plants play off the earthier colours of the steel, the brick terrace and the cedar shingles of the house – which has been re-conceived in 'homelier' style by architect Olle Lundberg.

The steps lead up to a substantial brick terrace that spans the bay-front of the house with seats in the walls seemingly moulded from soft brick. This is not a material one readily associates with Andrea's work – she tends to favour the more muted colours of natural stone and cast concrete in her sleek Modernist works. But Andrea explains that the terrace was formerly a driveway that snaked along the front of the house, and it made sense to keep it. Atop the front wall there are simple plantings of rosemary, lavender, plumbago, trumpet vine (*Campsis radicans*) and ivy – but it's all about the view.

"I wanted to create a feeling of being part of all this," says Andrea, gesturing across the wide expanse of the bay below us, criss-crossed by ferries and offset by bridges that are ▷

SUBTLE GREYS AND GREENS DEFINE THE MEDITATIVE REAR GARDEN



BLOCK PLANTING

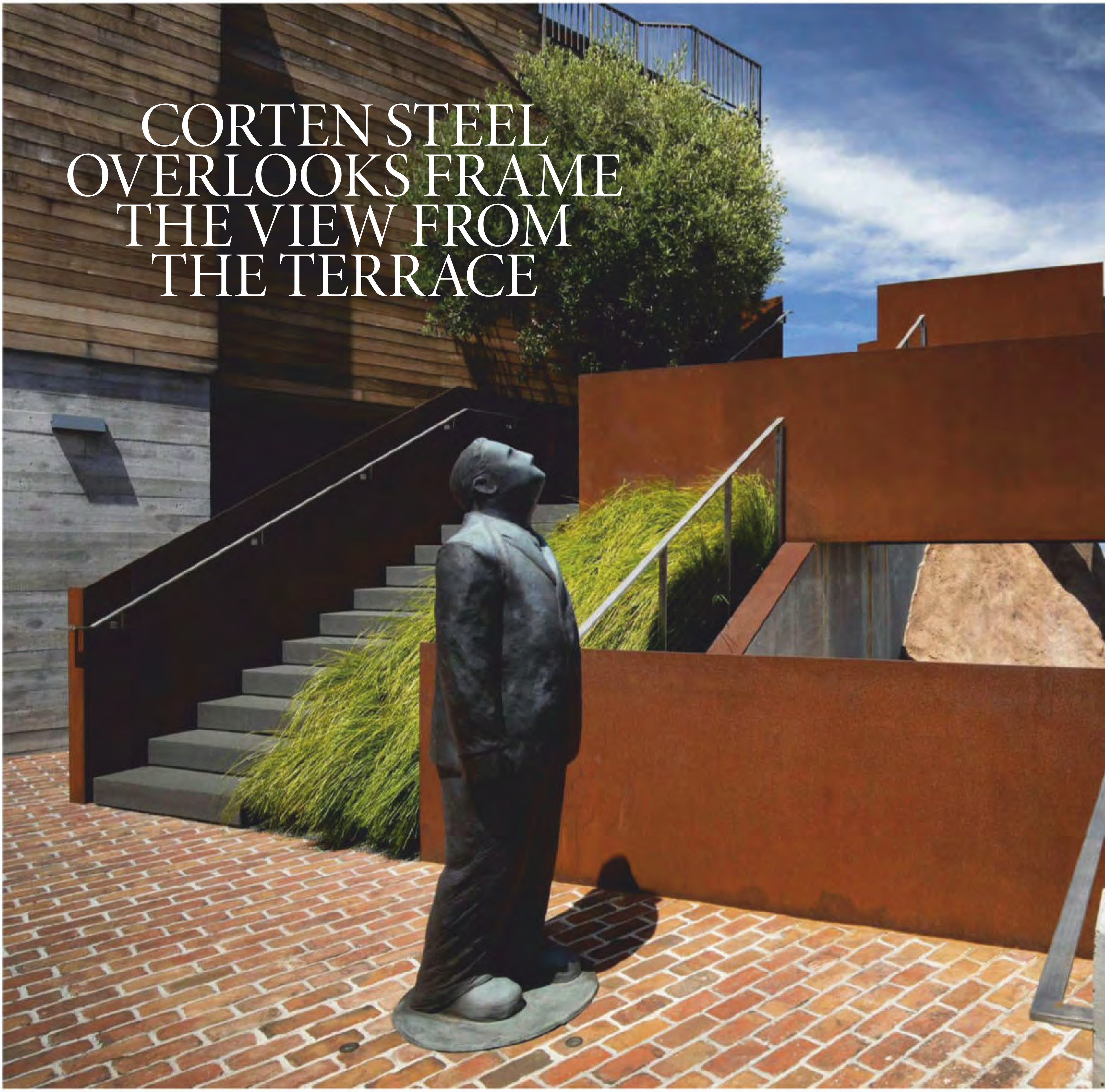
Block planting can be useful in contemporary settings. On this site planting in the parking forecourt and up the steps is realised in blocks of green-leaved perennial plants: first, a line of bamboo, then *Lomandra longifolia* 'Breeze' at the foot of the steps then *Ophiopogon* further up – create pleasing contrasts with the variegated woody hues of the cedar shingles on the building. The plantings play an architectural role, in that the size and shape of the blocks respond to the volumes of the house's façade. Block planting is also useful in areas visitors pass through quickly and where a complex planting scheme would compete with another distraction, in this case, a stupendous view.

1. A line of temple bamboo, ***Semiarundinaria fastuosa* var. *viridis*** flanks the parking forecourt.

2. Block-planted *Sesleria* 'Greenlee', a cultivar developed by the Californian natural-garden expert John Greenlee.

3. *Carex tumulicola*, a shade-loving native sedge which tumbles out of planters

4. Steps lead down from the meditative rear garden, with block plantings of ***Liriope muscari***, one of Andrea's 'most trusted' plants in difficult situations. Tough plants such as these can be thugs in company, so it is a good idea to corral them.



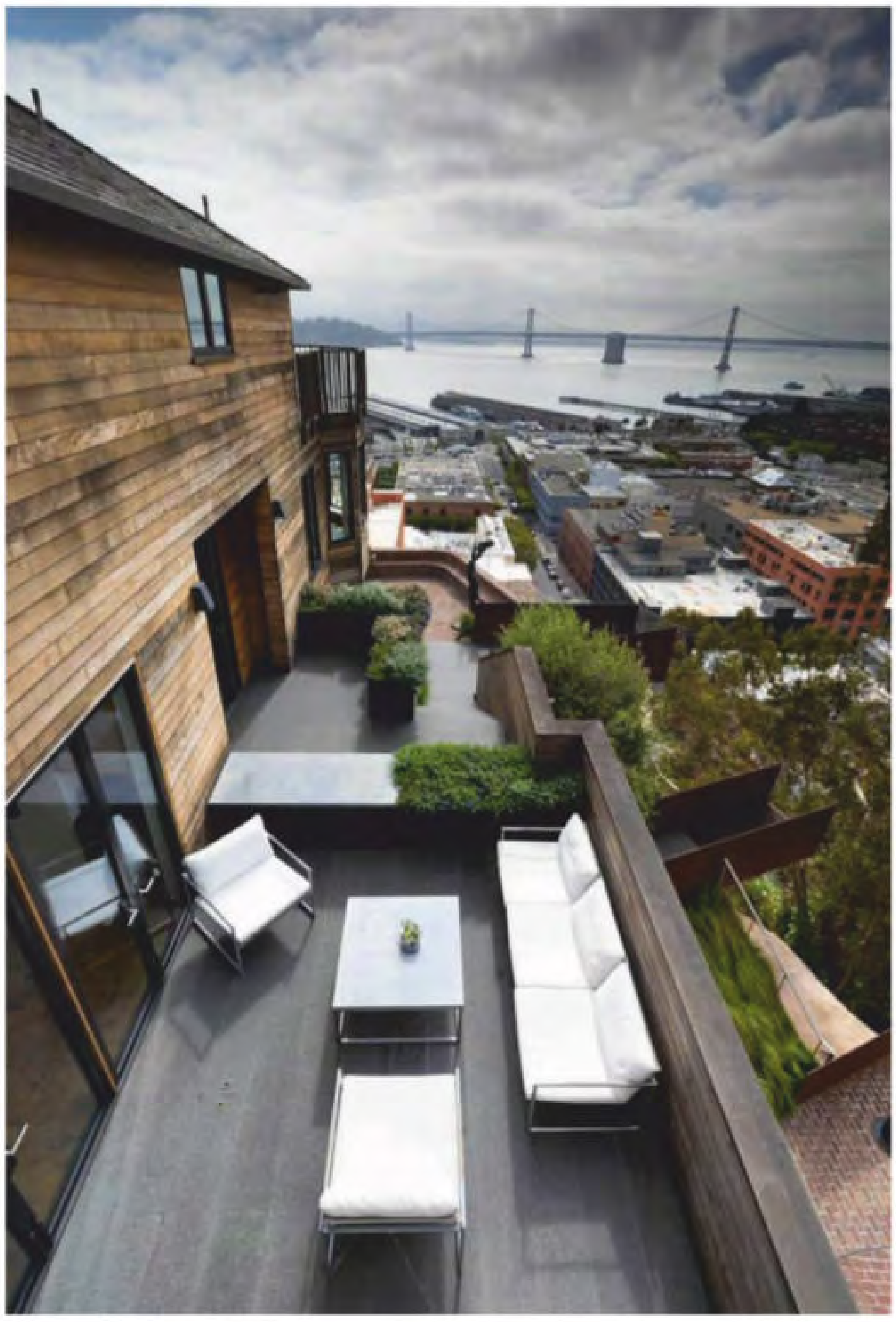
CORTEN STEEL OVERLOOKS FRAME THE VIEW FROM THE TERRACE

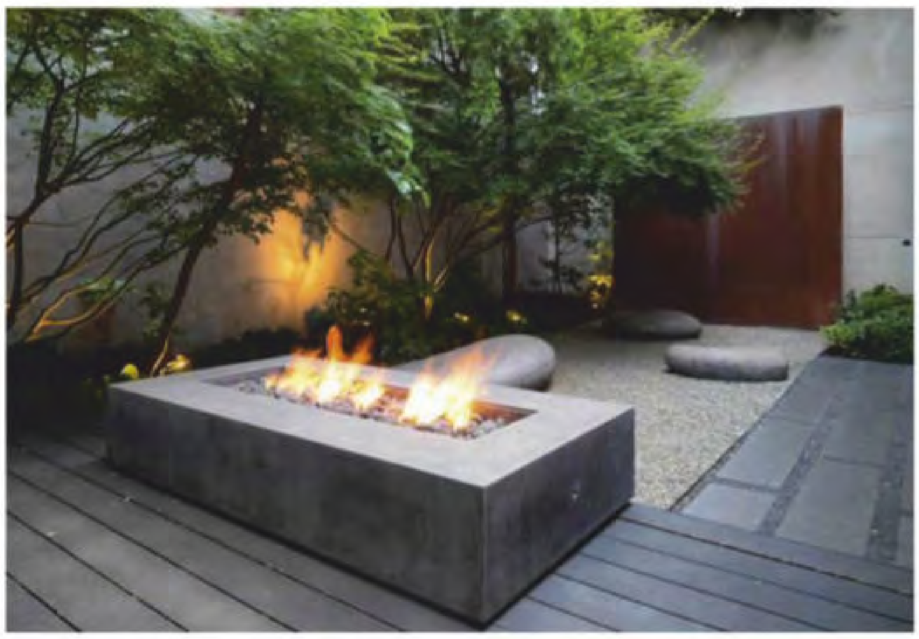
Above Andrea found that the site's scenic drama called for simplicity, especially at the foot of the steps where a single block of *Lomandra longifolia* 'Breeze' contrasts with the Corten steel. The sculpture *Looking Up* by Jim Rennert stands sentinel by the steps, though your eye is drawn to look out to Yerba Buena Island and the Oakland Bay Bridge.

▷ lit up at night. "I've been to parties here and people like to hang out in this space. It's like being in a bird's nest. In fact, the birds fly at eye level." As if on cue, a flock of noisy parakeets gambols by. The brick gives this terrace a warm, social feeling (underfloor heating helps), while the grey basalt used in other areas imparts a quiet, 'modern' flavour.

Another level up and visitors finally arrive at the front door. Here Andrea has created a stylised 'lawn' of *Pennisetum sphacelatum* in a rectangular bed because the client wanted to be able to see green all year round from her study window. Above is the top terrace, an elegant private seating area alongside the kitchen commanding more spectacular views.

The garden areas at the front of the house are spectacular but they are also highly exposed. So to allow for quieter moments, Andrea has created a meditative garden space behind the house in a most unpropitious setting, hemmed in by the sheer vertical wall of the neighbouring building that was once a bank. This enclosed space has a completely different feel, realised in subtle tones of grey, green and rust-brown. At one end is a seating





area defined by Corten steel walls with a large concrete fire pit. The garden is shaded by maple trees and surrounded by a bosky planting made up of sarcococca, hellebores, heucheras, dogwoods – planted for their winter colour – and the white Japanese snowball, *Viburnum plicatum* f. *tomentosum*.

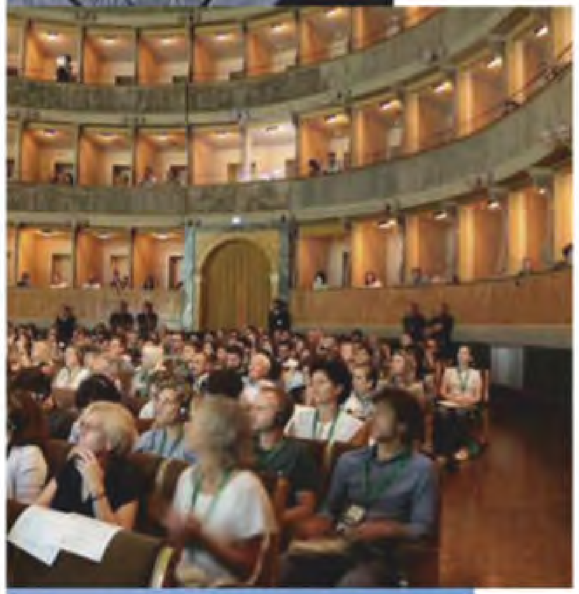
There is intriguing textural variety between the basalt pavers, grey gravel and three large cast-concrete 'pebbles' strewn across the space. A panel of Corten steel, framed by clumps of *Hydrangea quercifolia*, creates a sculptural moment at the other end of the garden space, where pink camellias from next-door's garden tumble over the wall in season, a pleasingly random interloper which Andrea also enjoys. □

Top The top kitchen terrace affords expansive views across San Francisco Bay. The overlooks can be seen protruding into space below.

Above The meditative garden at the rear of the house has a very different feel to the other areas. Maples shade the rear garden space, defined by a Corten steel wall feature and a dramatic fire pit.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Andrea's work at **acochran.com**



EVENTS AND SHOWS 2019

Garden shows and festivals are a great source of inspiration for both planting and design. Here's our pick of the best events and festivals taking place this year, both in the UK and abroad.

COMPILED BY ALYS HURN

PHOTOSHELTER.COM, HARROGATE FLOWER SHOWS, LEONARDO TAGLIABUE, ALFIO GAROZZO, ROSANNA CASTRINI

APRIL

6-7 April **Great Dixter Spring Plant Fair, UK** Specialist nurseries and seasonal plants. 11am-4pm. Admission with garden entry ticket £10.45. Great Dixter, Northiam, Rye, East Sussex TN31 6PH. Tel 01797 254048, greatdixter.co.uk

8-10 April **RHS Spring Launch and Orchid Show, UK** The first RHS show of the year, incorporating the RHS Orchid Show. 10am-5pm. From £5 (RHS members free). RHS Lawrence Hall, Westminster, London SW1P 2QD. Tel 0844 995 9664, rhs.org.uk

12-14 April **RHS Cardiff Flower Show, UK** Regional nurseries and show gardens. 10am-5.30pm. From £11. Bute Park, Cardiff Castle, Cardiff CF10 1BJ. Tel 0844 995 9664, rhs.org.uk

12-14 April **Fête des Plantes de Printemps, Château de Saint-Jean de Beauregard, France** Unusual plants from Europe's finest nurseries. 10am-6pm. From €14. Château de Saint-Jean de Beauregard, Rue de Château, 91940 Saint-Jean de Beauregard. Tel +33 (0)1 60 12 00 01, chateaudesaintjeandebeauregard.com

25-28 April **Harrogate Spring Flower Show, UK** Celebrating spring planting. 9.30am-5.30pm. From £17. Regional Agricultural Centre, Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG2 8NZ. Tel 01423 546157, flowershow.org.uk

27 April – October **Radicepura Garden Festival, Sicily** Six-month international event dedicated to Mediterannean garden design. Botanica Srl, Strada 17, N19, Franzione di San Leonardello 95014 Giarre, Catania, Sicily. Tel +39 095 964154, radicepurafestival.com

MAY

3-4 May **Toby's Garden Festival, UK** Toby Buckland's festival includes quality plants and talks from BBC *Gardeners' World* presenters Joe Swift and Frances Tophill. 10am-5pm. From £8.50. Powderham Castle, Kenton, nr Exeter EX6 8JQ. Tel 07561 261615, tobygardenfest.co.uk

9-12 May **RHS Malvern Spring Flower Show, UK** Show gardens and plants. 9am-6pm. From £19. Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcester WR13 6NW. Tel 0844 995 9664, rhs.org.uk

10-12 May **Beervelde Garden Days, Belgium** Plants and artisan craft items. 10am-6pm. From €10. Beervelde Parc, Beervelde-Dorp 75, 9080 Beervelde. Tel +32 (0)9 356 81 82, parkvanbeervelde.be

17-19 May **Les Journées des Plantes, France** France's premier garden event. 10am-6pm. From €17. Domaine de Chantilly, 7 Rue du Connétable, 60500 Chantilly. Tel +33 (0)344 27 31 80, domainedechantilly.com

21-25 May **RHS Chelsea Flower Show, UK** The UK's leading horticultural show, featuring gardens from leading designers. 8am-8pm. From £30. London Gate, Royal Hospital Road, Royal Hospital Chelsea, London SW3 4SR. Tel 0844 995 9664, rhs.org.uk

JUNE

30 May – 3 June **Bloom, Ireland** Ireland's largest garden festival, with show gardens from top designers. 9am-6pm. From €13. Phoenix Park, Dublin, Ireland. Tel +353 1 295 8181, bloominthepark.com

31 May – 2 June **Gardening Scotland, UK** Garden inspiration and Scottish nurseries. 10am-5pm. From £11.60. Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston, Edinburgh EH28 8NB. Tel 0131 333 0965, gardeningscotland.com

5-9 June **RHS Chatsworth Flower Show, UK** The latest addition to the RHS annual show circuit. 10am-6.30pm. From £27.50. Chatsworth, Bakewell, Derbyshire DE45 1PP. Tel 0844 995 9664, rhs.org.uk

14-16 June **Bingerden International Specialist Nursery Days, the Netherlands** Quality European nurseries. 10am-6pm. From €12. Huis Bingerden, Bingerdenseweg 21, 6986 CE Angerlo, the Netherlands. Tel +31 (0)313 48 42 38, bingerden.com

21-23 June **Blenheim Palace Flower Show, UK** Floral displays and garden inspiration. 10am-5pm. From £12. Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, Oxfordshire OX20 1PP. Tel 01702 549623, blenheimflowershow.co.uk

21-23 June **RHS Harlow Carr Flower Show, UK** Plant sales and sundries. Admission with garden ticket entry £10.35. RHS Garden Harlow Carr, Crag Lane, Beckwithshaw, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG31 1QB. Tel 01423 565418, rhs.org.uk

22-23 June **Woburn Abbey Garden Show, UK** Award-winning nurseries, talks and gardening advice. Now in its tenth year. 10am-6pm. From £14. Woburn Abbey and Gardens, Bedfordshire MK17 9WA. Tel 01525 290333, woburnabbey.co.uk

JULY

1-7 July **RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival, UK** Show gardens, plants and workshops. 10am-7.30pm (see website for Friday and Sunday opening times). From £28. Hampton Court Palace, East Molesey, Surrey KT8 9AU. Tel 0844 995 9664,rhs.org.uk

17-21 July **RHS Tatton Park Flower Show, UK** A platform for new talent, plus plants and show gardens. 10am-6.30pm (5pm, Sunday). From £23.50. Tatton Park, Mereheath Lane, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 6QN. Tel 0844 995 9664, rhs.org.uk

AUGUST

31 July – 4 August **RHS Hyde Hall Flower Show, UK** Specialist nurseries and gardening sundries. 10am-5pm. Admission with garden entry ticket £10.35. RHS Garden Hyde Hall, Creephedge Lane, Rettendon, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 8RA. Tel 01245 402019, rhs.org.uk

16-18 August **RHS Rosemoor Flower Show, UK** Regional nurseries and planting inspiration. 10am-6pm. Admission with garden entry ticket £10.35. RHS Garden Rosemoor, Great Torrington, Devon EX28 8PH. Tel 01805 624067, rhs.org.uk

SEPTEMBER

3-8 September **RHS Wisley Flower Show, UK** Floral displays including the National Dahlia Society Annual Show. 9am-6pm. Admission with garden entry ticket, £13.05. RHS Garden Wisley, Woking Surrey GU23 6QB. Tel 01483 224234, rhs.org.uk

27-29 September **Fête des Plantes d'Automne, Château de Saint-Jean de Beauregard, France** Seasonal plants from Europe's finest nurseries. 10am-6pm. From €14. Château de Saint-Jean de Beauregard, Rue de Château, 91940 Saint-Jean de Beauregard, France. Tel +33 (0)1 60 12 00 01, chateaudesaintjeandebeauregard.com

28-29 September **Malvern Autumn Show, UK** Autumn planting and seasonal vegetables. 9am-6pm. From £17. Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 6NW. Tel 0844 811 0050, malvernautumn.co.uk

OCTOBER

4-6 October **Orticolario, Italy** Garden festival on the shores of Lake Como. From €12. Villa Erba Gardens, Largo Luchino Visconti 4, 22012 Cernobbio, Italy. Tel +39 031 3347503, orticolario.it

5-6 October **Great Dixter Autumn Fair, UK** Seasonal plants and international nurseries. 11am-4pm. Admission with garden entry ticket £10.45. Great Dixter, Northiam, Rye, East Sussex TN31 6PH. Tel 01797 254048, greatdixter.co.uk

IN BRIEF

What Private family garden.

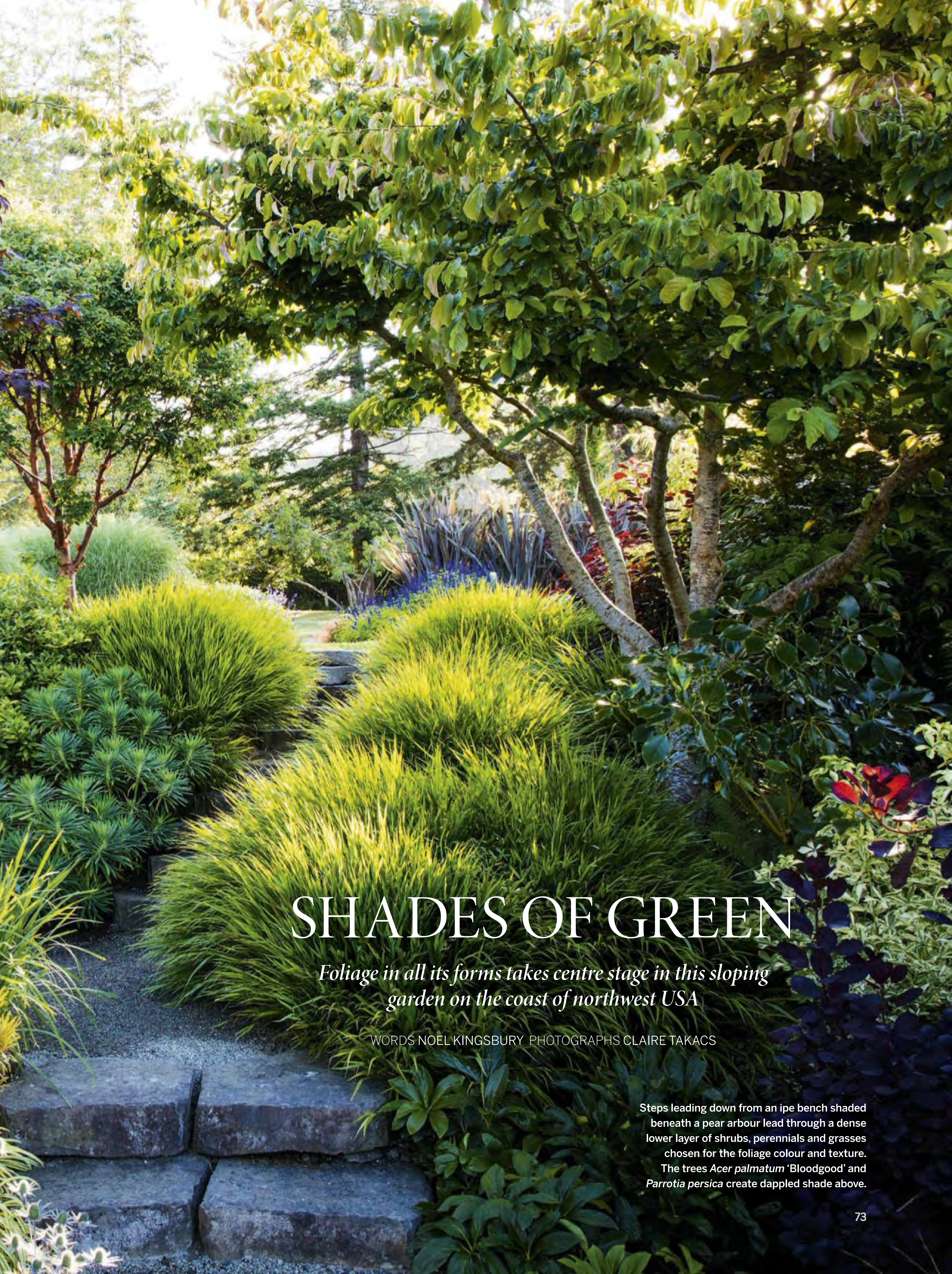
Where Southwest Oregon, USA.

Size 930 square metres.

Soil Sandy and well drained.

Climate Pacific Maritime climate, with relatively dry summers, with a prevailing north wind.

Hardiness zone USDA 9a.



SHADES OF GREEN

Foliage in all its forms takes centre stage in this sloping garden on the coast of northwest USA

WORDS NOEL KINGSBURY PHOTOGRAPHS CLAIRE TAKACS

Steps leading down from an ipe bench shaded beneath a pear arbour lead through a dense lower layer of shrubs, perennials and grasses chosen for the foliage colour and texture. The trees *Acer palmatum* 'Bloodgood' and *Parrotia persica* create dappled shade above.

"You can grow anything on the Oregon coast," says Rebecca Sams. "There's such an abundance of options." Rebecca should know, along with her partner Buell Steelman, she runs the landscape design practice Mosaic Gardens based in the northwest US state. With so many options it says much for the pair's design discipline that in the garden they have created at Coos Bay, they have pared back the planting palette to place the emphasis on form and foliage texture.

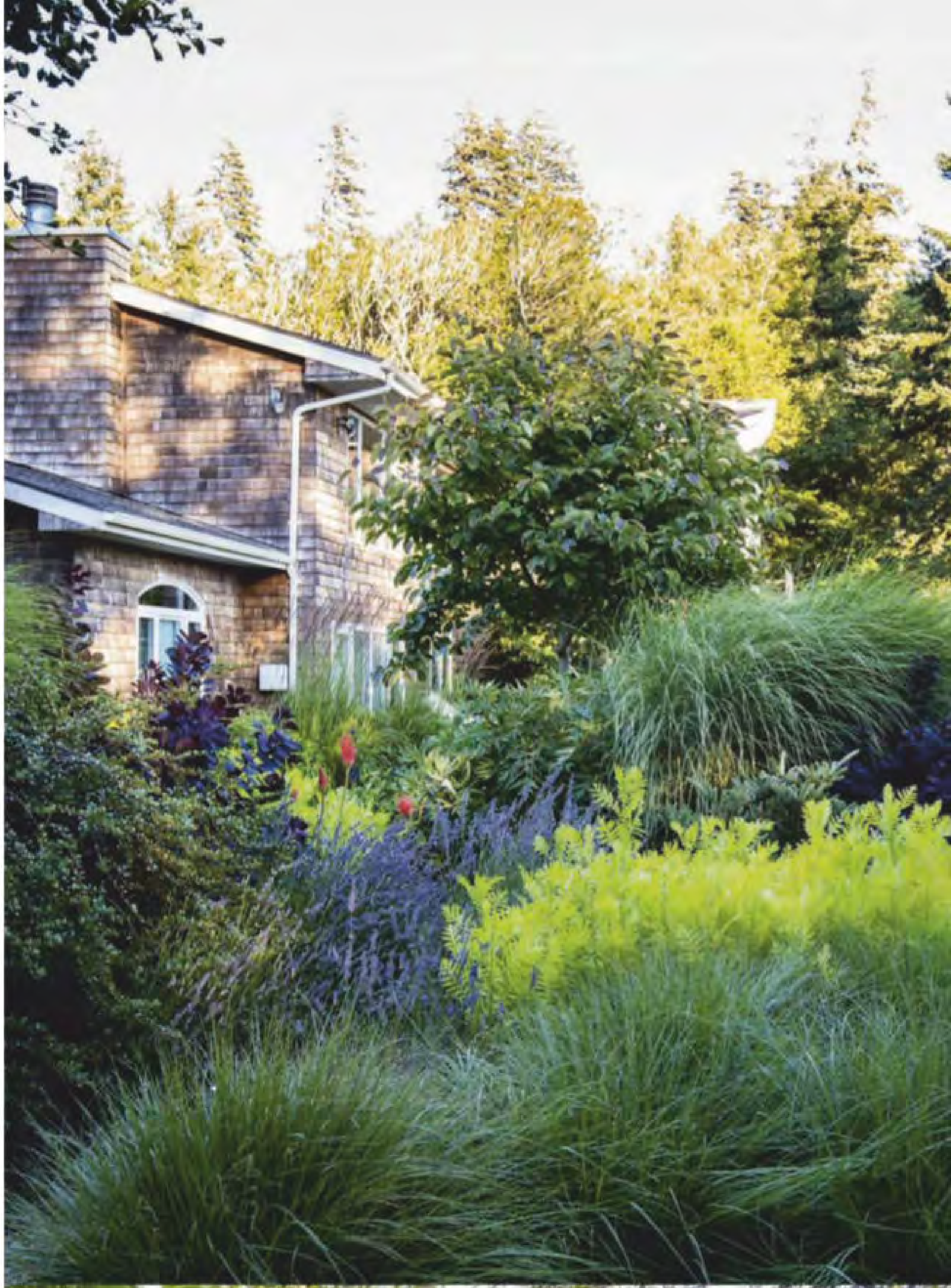
The clients, Lori and Steve Tersigni, came across Rebecca and Buell's work in 2007 when the design duo's own garden was featured in an American gardening magazine. "I was thumbing through a magazine when I saw a garden spread that caught my eye," remembers Lori. "I was attracted to the lines, the separate spaces, the axes and views of the garden." Pleased to discover a landscape design company so close to home that she felt would understand her needs, Lori contacted Rebecca and Buell.

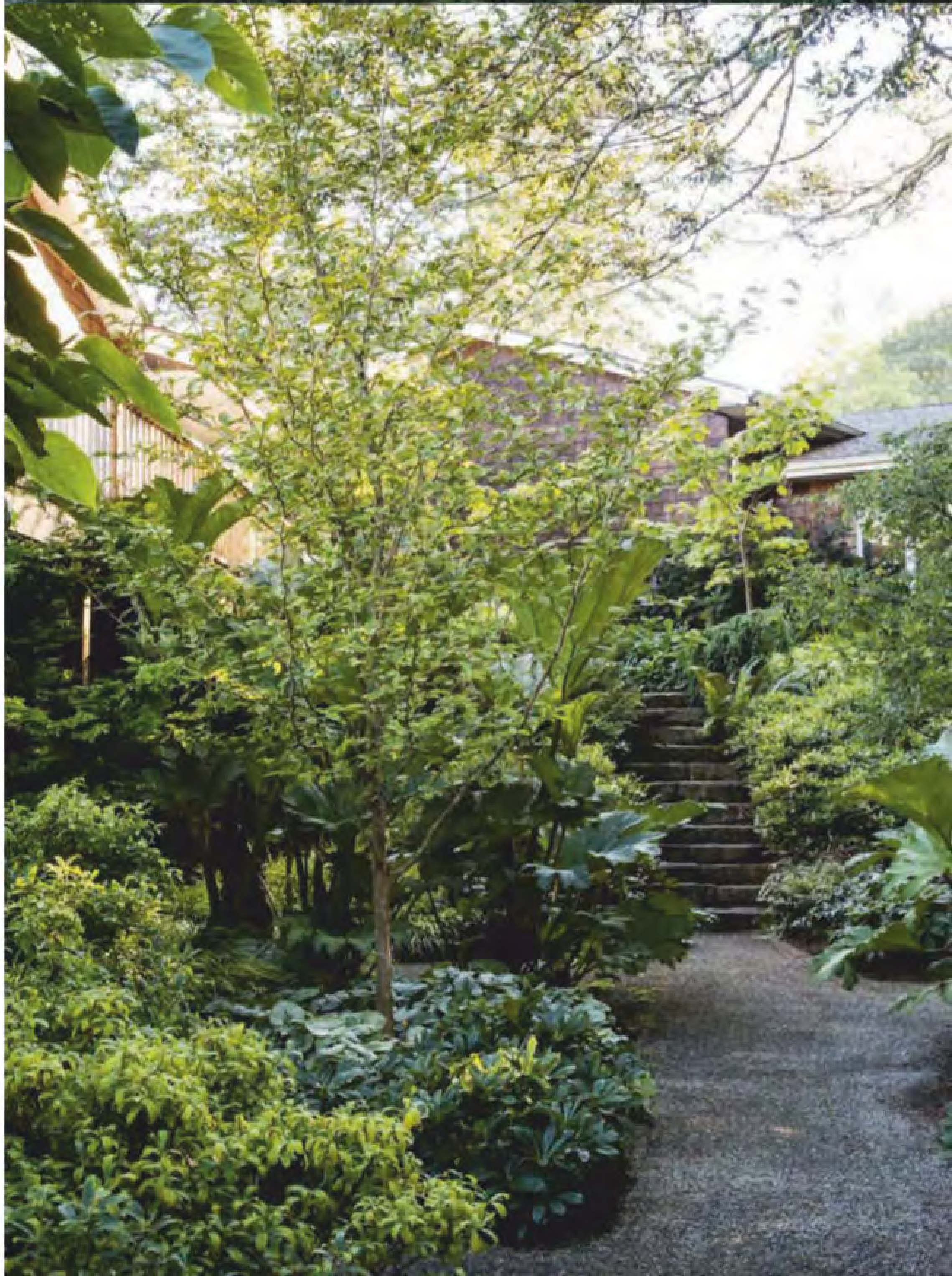
Lori had been drawn to the strong, classical lines and full plantings of Rebecca and Buell's garden, but for her own at Coos Bay she also wanted big lawns where children could play alongside intimate, enclosed spaces and more ample seating areas where family and friends could get together. "We are a very busy family," she says. "The garden has been a place of gathering for our extended family; a play place for our now grown children and now our grandchildren who love to have the run of the place. The garden has been a magnet, pulling them back time and time again."

Rebecca and Buell's approach works these functional spaces into a relatively formal design in what Rebecca describes as "balanced diversity". There are two large, open lawns alongside a meadow that allow space for grandchildren to run freely. Formal features, such as a boxwood hedge and a birch allée are balanced by elements of whimsy in the form of gigantic *Gunnera manicata* and a scattering of *Picea glauca* var. *albertiana* 'Conica'. Straight paths tend to dominate, welcoming visitors, but there are also meandering paths that encourage visitors to explore more of the garden.

Tying all these elements together is a strong underpinning of foliage plants. Foliage forms the mainstay of many of Rebecca and Buell's designs, but here at the coast there are good reasons for depending on it. Most flowering perennials come from continental climates with a short growing season, so expecting them to look good continuously in a location with such a ▷

To continue turn to page 78





Clockwise from top left

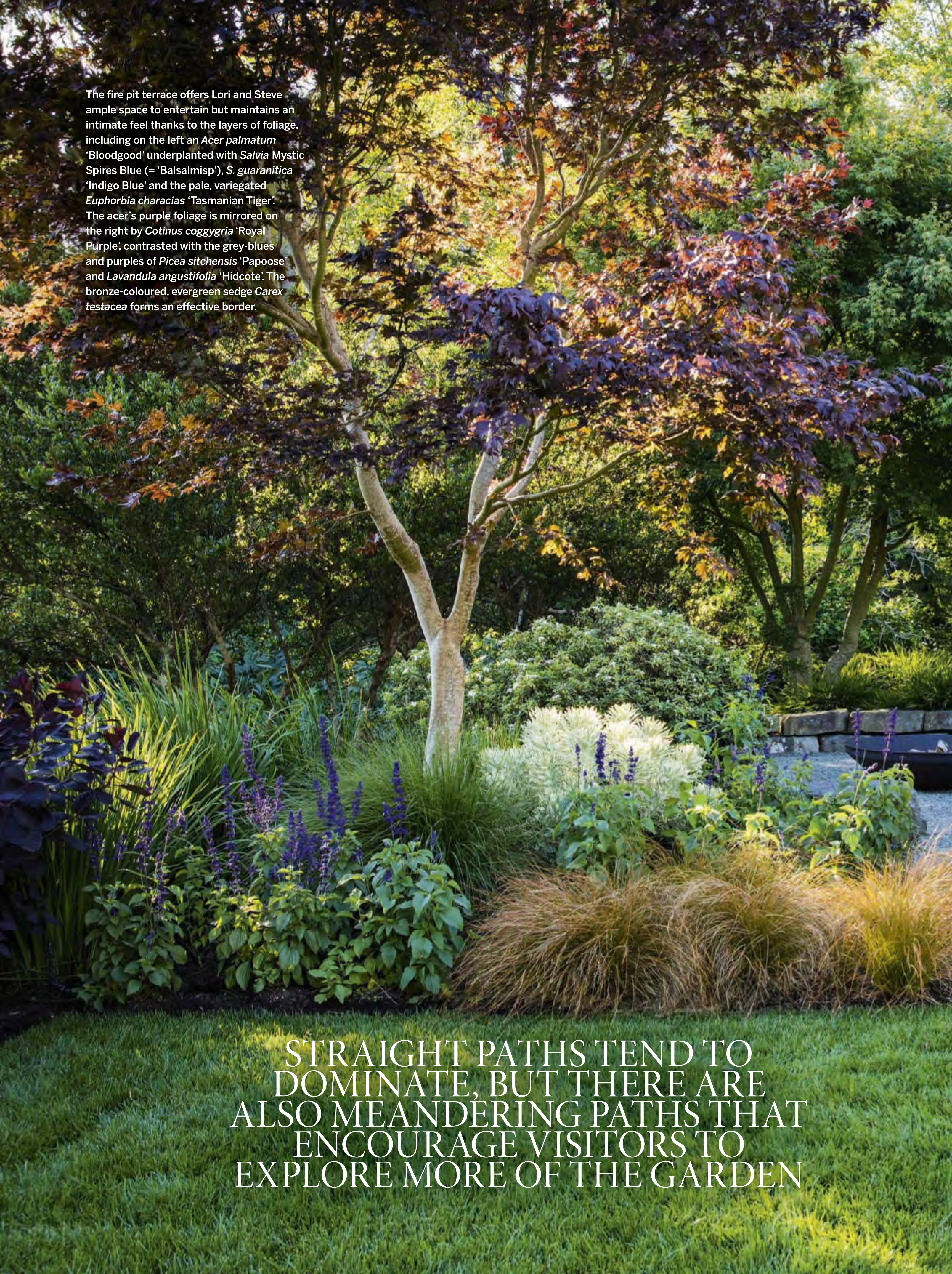
Close to the house the bright lemony-yellow foliage of *Tanacetum vulgare* 'Isla Gold' creates a vibrant contrast with the purple leaves of *Cotinus coggygria* 'Royal Purple'. *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln' forms clumps in the foreground, with *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Morning Light' behind.

A small terrace, surrounded by low colourful and fragrant planting looks out over Coos Bay and the McCullough Memorial Bridge.

A dark-red *Acer palmatum* 'Bloodgood' provides shade and privacy for the fire pit at one end of the lawn around which the tapestry of colours and textures includes *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Hidcote' and bronze *Carex testacea*.

The steeply sloping garden is built on several levels. Here steps lead down to a shady path where different forms of foliage, including the exotic leaves of *Gunnera manicata* and bamboo *Fargesia rufa,* are mixed to great effect. The evergreen foliage of *Helleborus* x *hybridus* makes an interesting groundcover.

THE GARDEN HAS BEEN A MAGNET, PULLING THE FAMILY BACK TIME AND TIME AGAIN



The fire pit terrace offers Lori and Steve ample space to entertain but maintains an intimate feel thanks to the layers of foliage, including on the left an *Acer palmatum* 'Bloodgood' underplanted with *Salvia* Mystic Spires Blue (= 'Balsalmisp'), *S. guaranitica* 'Indigo Blue' and the pale, variegated *Euphorbia characias* 'Tasmanian Tiger'. The acer's purple foliage is mirrored on the right by *Cotinus coggygria* 'Royal Purple', contrasted with the grey-blues and purples of *Picea sitchensis* 'Papoose' and *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Hidcote'. The bronze-coloured, evergreen sedge *Carex testacea* forms an effective border.

STRAIGHT PATHS TEND TO DOMINATE, BUT THERE ARE ALSO MEANDERING PATHS THAT ENCOURAGE VISITORS TO EXPLORE MORE OF THE GARDEN

▷ long growing season and which is quite windy is unrealistic. Among the select few included here are hellebores for their evergreen foliage, *Eryngium* x *zabelii* 'Big Blue', for its tough foliage and persistent seedheads, and *Salvia guaranitica* 'Indigo Blue' for its exceptionally long-flowering season.

"Foliage contrast is absolutely key," says Rebecca. "It's best to play with different foliages and have them bounce off each other. We are interested in both colour and texture and layering plant heights." Most of the planting is at relatively low level, but with a higher layer of small trees, so there are two clear levels of interest to help break up and differentiate a series of spaces.

Now that planting is in its tenth year, these layers of foliage have given the garden a lush complexity, kept fresh by the garden's irrigation system. "People think that because it's coastal Oregon it rains all the time," says Buell. "But it doesn't. The summers are dry." The team at Mosaic Gardens help keep the plants in order and once a month either Rebecca or Buell visit to oversee the team's work and to look at ways of adapting the planting. Over time as trees have grown the pair have introduced more shade-loving plants to cope with the changing light levels but they are quick to point out that these adaptations are development not maintenance. "If you talk about maintenance there is a danger the garden becomes static," says Rebecca. Given the diversity of what will grow in Oregon, static is the very last thing this characterful and joyous garden is in danger of becoming. □

USEFUL INFORMATION
Find out more about Rebecca and Buell's work at
mosaic-gardens.com

PLANTING COMBINATIONS

Clockwise from top left

Green and blue

At the entrance to the fire pit, the blue-green *Picea sitchensis* 'Papoose (**1**)', a favourite of Lori's, contrasts in both texture and colour with the *Salvia guaranitica* 'Indigo Blue' (**2**), a very long-flowering cultivar. Behind it is the upright foliage of *Callistemon pallidus* (**3**), grown for the blueish colour of the young leaves; it originated at Cistus Nursery in Portland, one of the most innovative and exciting nurseries in the Pacific North West.

Compact shrubs

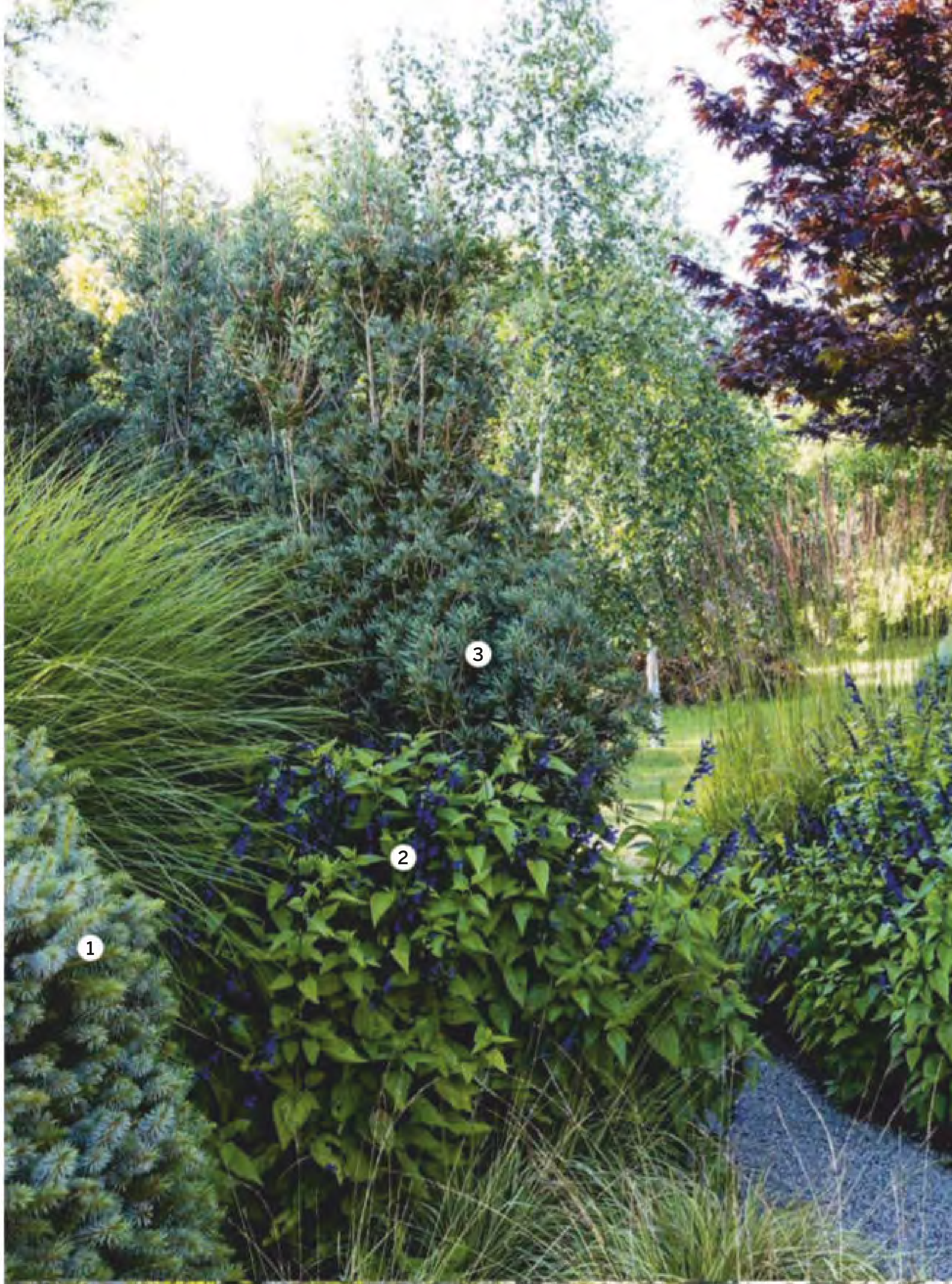
The soft brown furry 'indumentum' on the young leaves of this *Rhododendron yakushimanum* (**1**) hybrid will have been proceeded by pale-pink flowers. Like all 'yak' hybrids this will stay as a compact plant. The shrub behind is the highly scented and relatively long-flowering *Daphne* x *transatlantica* 'Jim's Pride' (**2**).

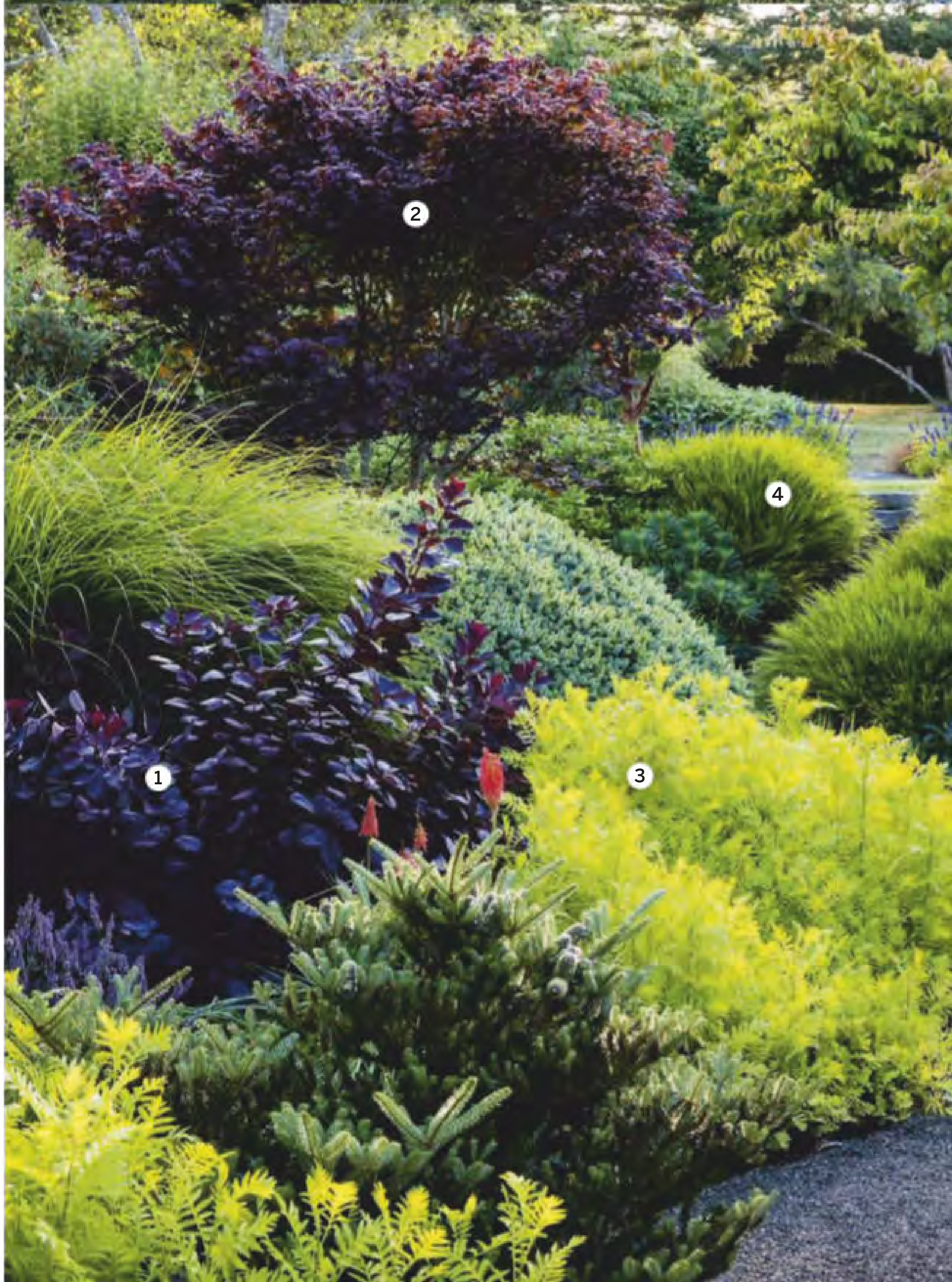
Bursts of colour

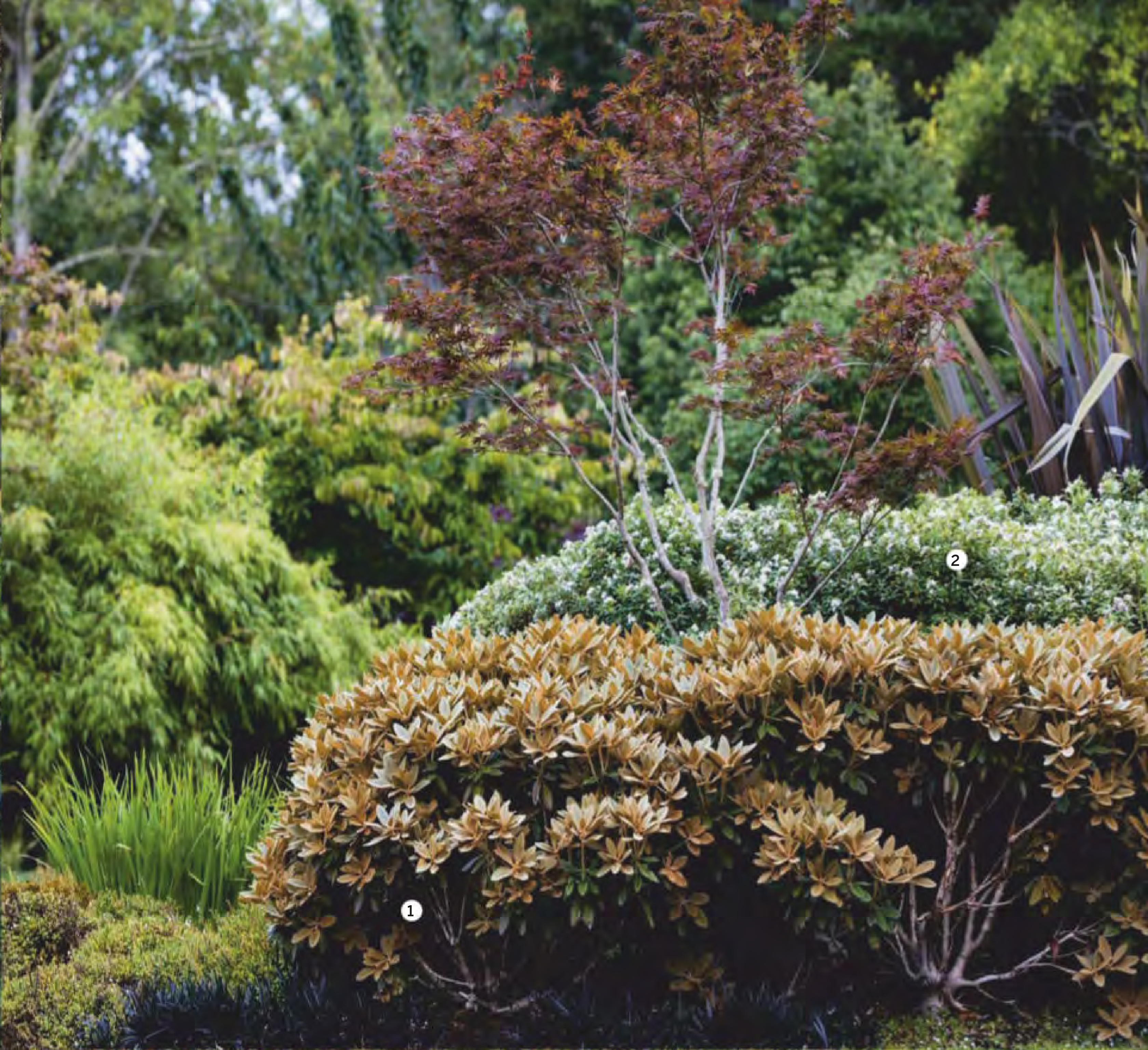
Eryngium x *zabelii* 'Big Blue' (**1**), adds a burst of eye-catching colour in a garden with very few perennials. Eryngiums make good coastal plants as they are resilient to wind and look good over a long period. Here they contrast well with the foliage of the *Rhododendron makinoi* hybrid (**2**). But the real focal point is the bright-yellow flowers of *Kniphofia* 'Candlelight' (**3**), which stand out even more against the rich colour of *Phormium tenax* Purpureum Group (**4**).

Bold contrasts

Purple foliage in the form of *Cotinus coggygria* 'Royal Purple' (**1**) and *Acer palmatum* 'Trompenburg' (**2**) contrasts boldy with the yellow foliage of *Tanacetum vulgare* 'Isla Gold' (**3**), and with the fresh green of the grass *Hakonechloa macra* (**4**). This is undoubtedly the best foliage grass for light shade. Its neatly textured foliage and form is used here as an underplanting for the tree is *Parrotia persica* (**5**).



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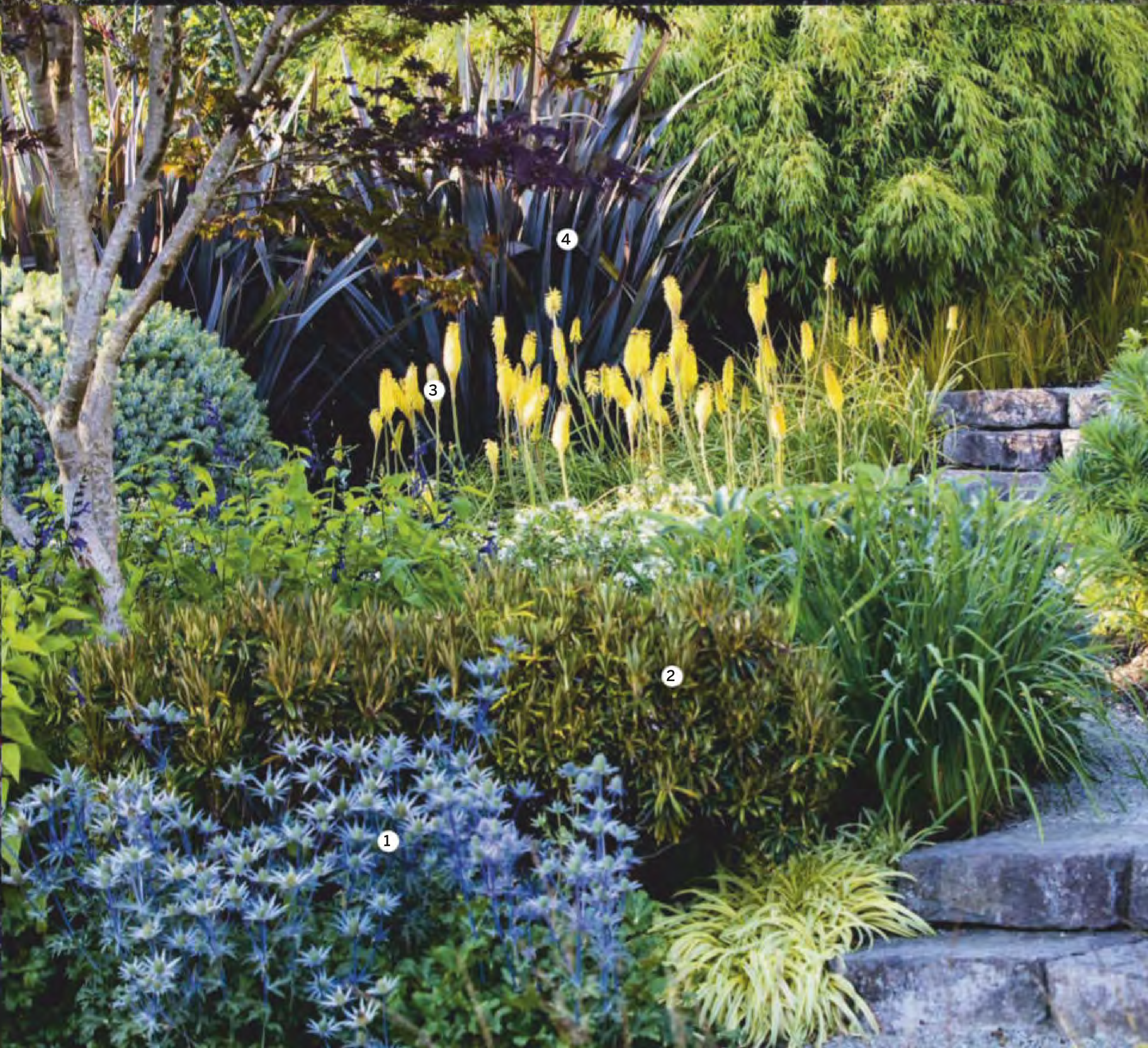
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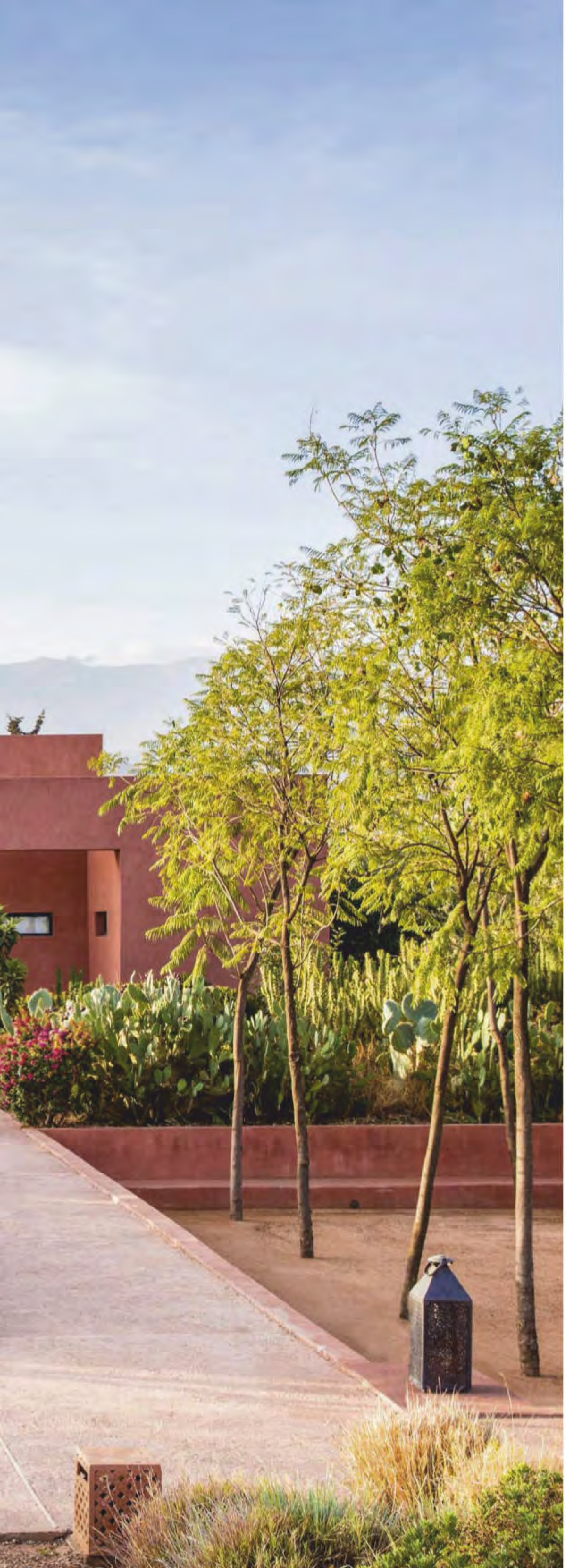
SCULPTURAL QUALITY

In the foothills of Morocco's Atlas Mountains, designers Eric Ossart and Arnaud Maurières have created a garden as stylish as the house it surrounds using only plants suited to the hot arid conditions

WORDS **JODIE JONES** PHOTOGRAPHS **CLAIRE TAKACS**



Silhouetted against the dramatic backdrop of the Atlas Mountains, the earth red pavilions of the Azaran complex have a strikingly sculptural quality that could have been harsh, were it not for the extraordinary planting that wraps around them on all sides. The work of renowned designers Eric Ossart and Arnaud Maurières, these gardens exemplify the French expat duo's passion for creating landscapes that are both visually stunning and environmentally respectful.

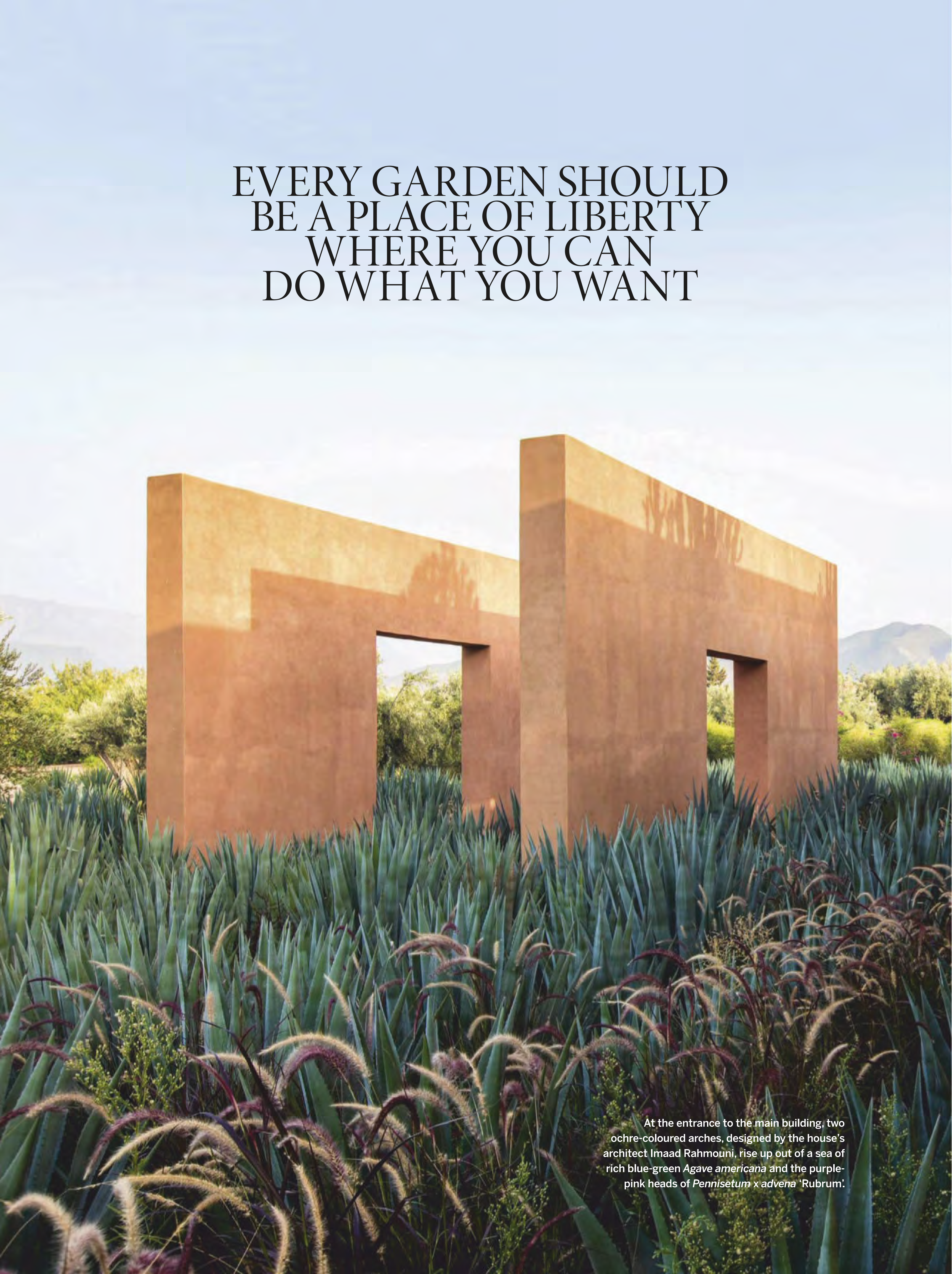
"It was 2010 when we first saw this place," says Arnaud. "The buildings were not yet complete, but it was already clear that there was no proper relationship between the various elements. The main house, three pavilions with bedrooms, and a swimming pool were all spread around the blank canvas of a sloping site. Our first and most important intervention was to establish a route that led from entrance to garage to house to pool. This formed the basic map. Then we put in a series of shallow terraces to deal with the slope and impose a structure on the site."

In classic Ossart + Maurières style, the resulting network of paths forms a strict grid. "We don't do winding paths," says Arnaud. "Your routes must be direct although your planting should break out of this and conceal the way ahead." And what a planting it is… Many key plants were selected by Eric between 2000 and 2005, when he undertook an extensive survey to find Moroccan natives worth cultivating, "We tried hundreds of different plants and only succeeded with around ten per cent," says Arnaud. *Agave sisalana* was one such success story. This was traditionally only grown as a commercial crop for the sisal industry until Eric and Arnaud spotted its ornamental qualities. At Azaran it now grows in vast drifts that intermingle with other agave cultivars, selected cacti and waving oceans of ornamental grasses to create a stunning effect.

"This is our Steppe planting style," explains Arnaud. "It all looks very wild and native, but the plants may actually originate from Africa, America, Madagascar – anywhere we have found attractive plants that are adapted to the conditions. It is an artificial landscape but it looks very natural. Every garden should be a place of liberty where you can do what you want, provided that you don't use too ▷

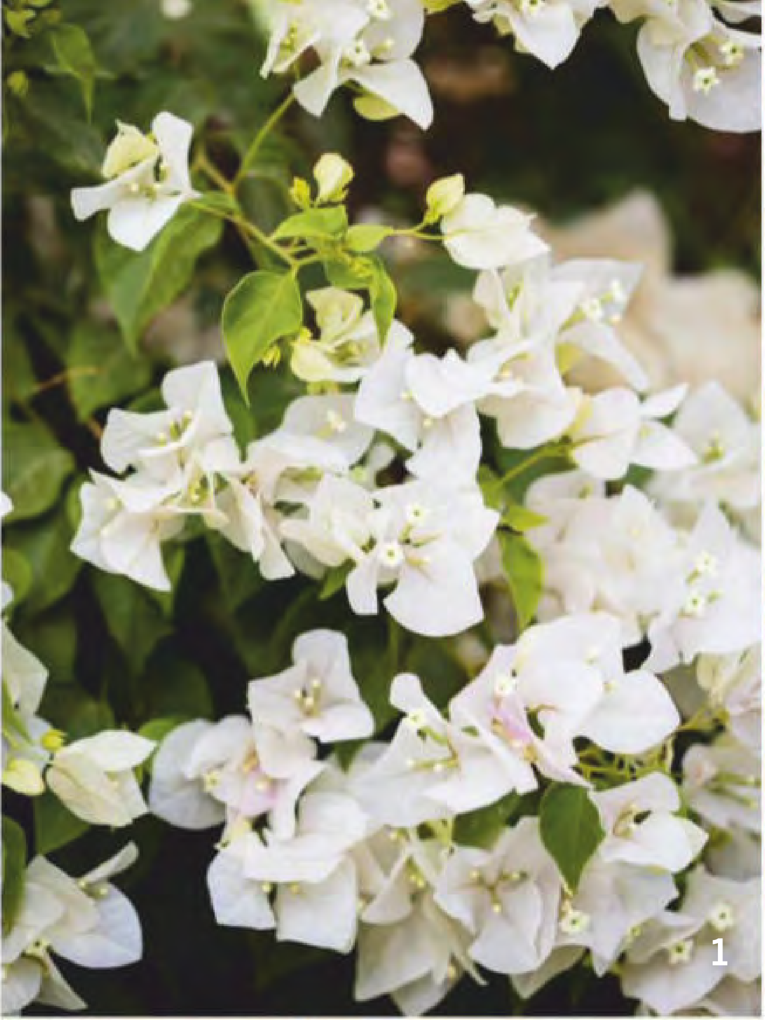
To continue turn to page 85

Left This courtyard filled with succulents, cacti and shrubs marks the intersection of the paths that link the garden's three pavilions to the main house. The jacaranda-shaded sunken area to the right is used for boules.



EVERY GARDEN SHOULD BE A PLACE OF LIBERTY WHERE YOU CAN DO WHAT YOU WANT

At the entrance to the main building, two ochre-coloured arches, designed by the house's architect Imaad Rahmouni, rise up out of a sea of rich blue-green *Agave americana* and the purple-pink heads of *Pennisetum x advena* 'Rubrum'.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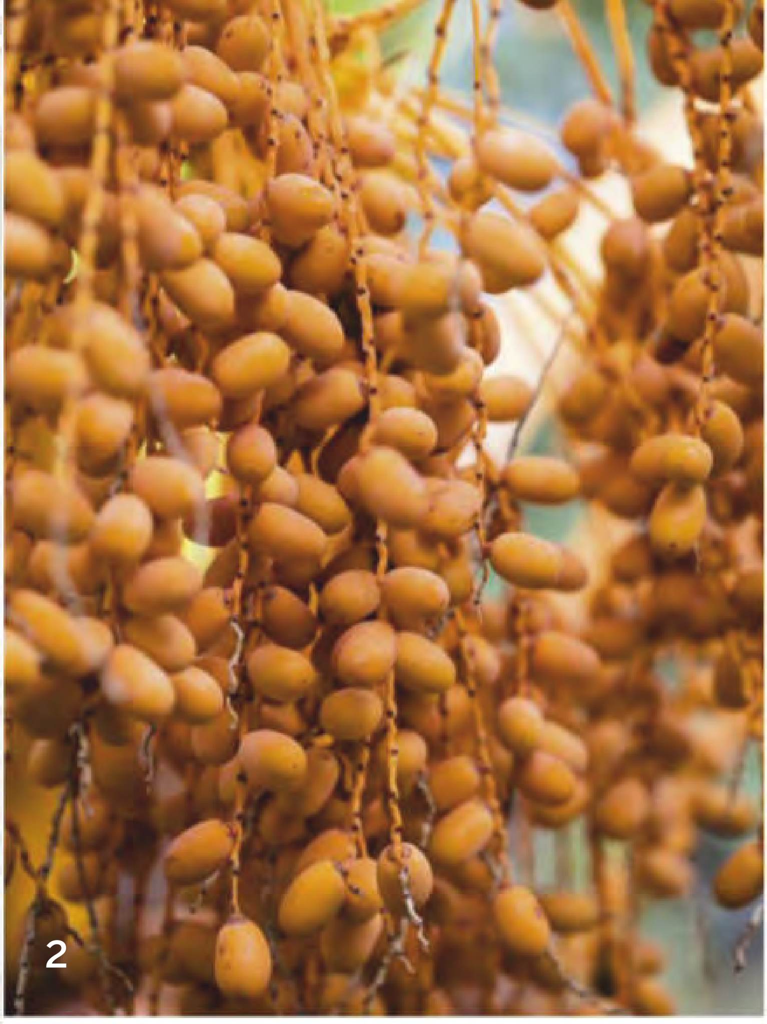
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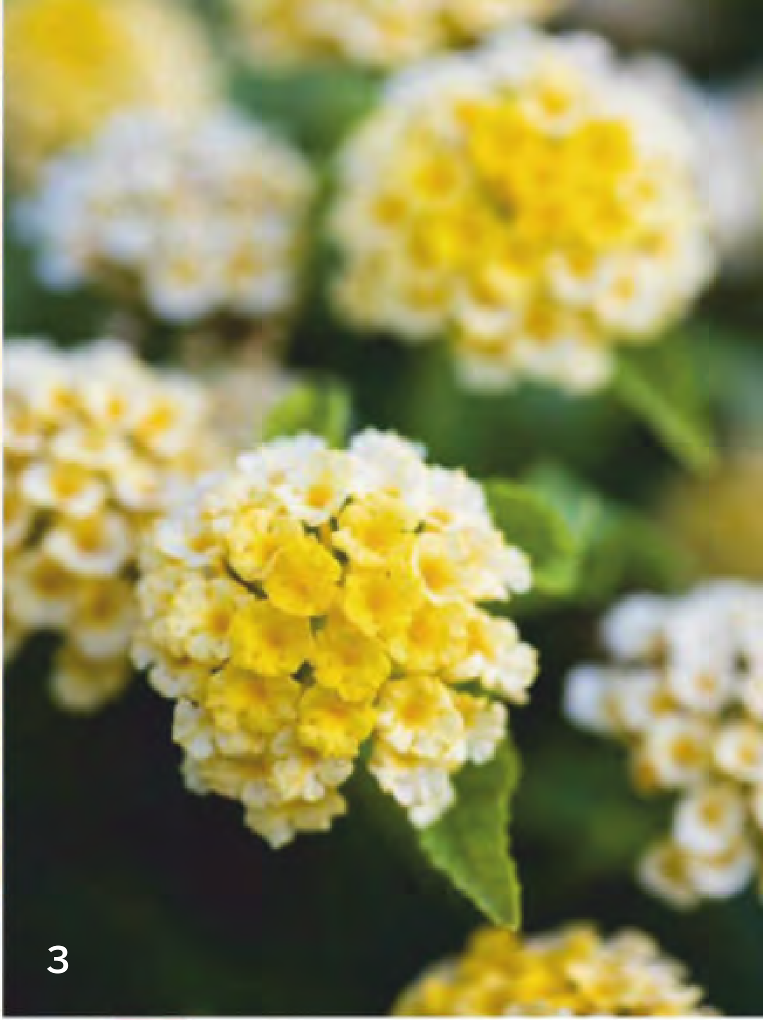
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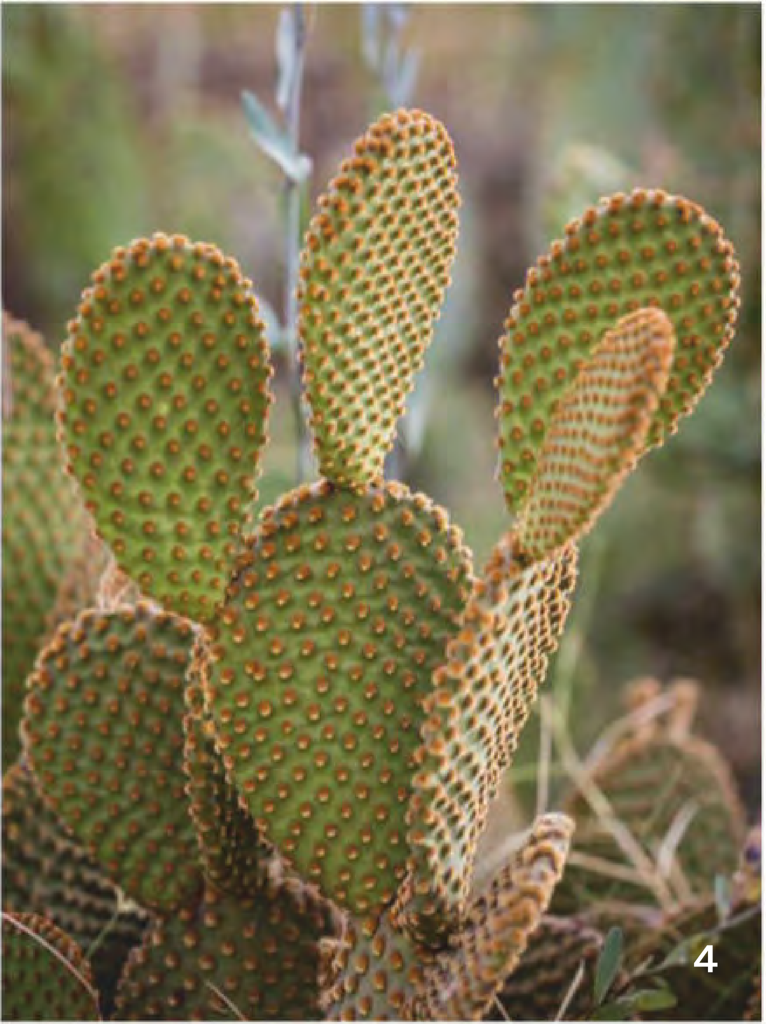
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Eight key plants from Azaran

1 ***Bougainvillea* 'Marie Blanc'** A robust cultivar that is highly floriferous and fast growing. 4-8m. USDA 9a-11†.

2 ***Phoenix dactylifera*** Emblematic of southern Morocco, date palms grow slowly, and are often used by Eric and Arnaud as large subjects. 10-30m. USDA 9a-11.

3 ***Lantana camara* 'Esperanta Lemon'** *Lantana camara* is native to the arid areas of Mexico so resistant to drought while still flowering generously. 1.2m.RHS H1C, USDA 10a-11.

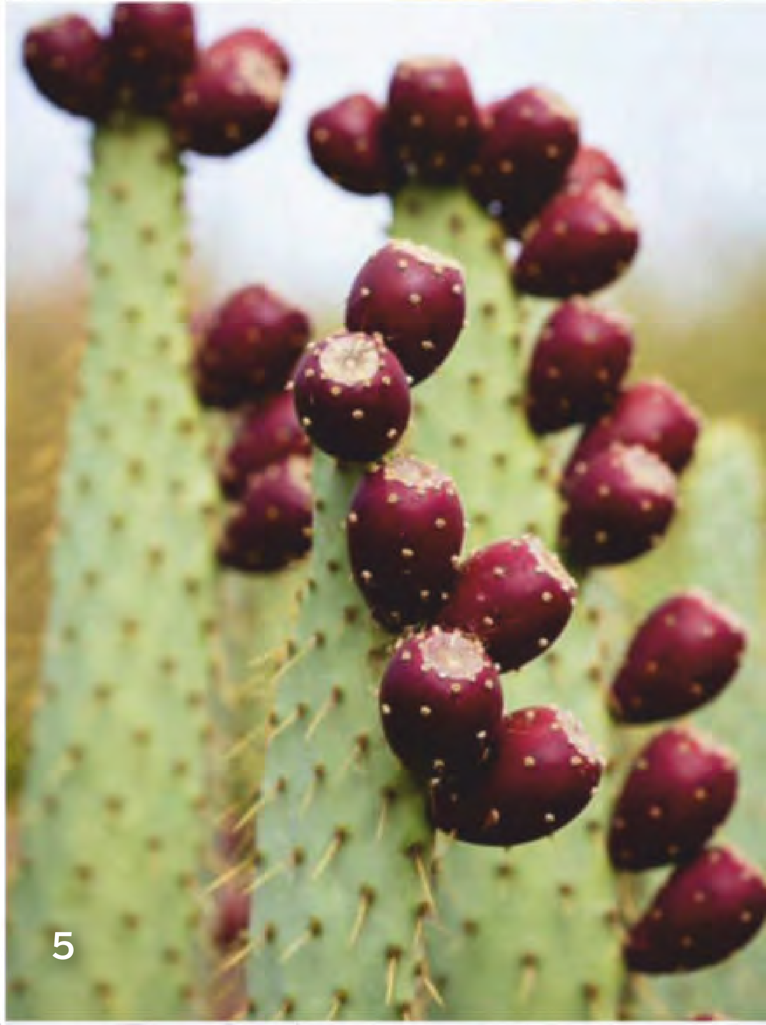
4 ***Opuntia microdasys*** A fast-growing cactus and an essential plant for arid gardens. 60cm. AGM*. RHS H2.

5 ***Opuntia engelmannii*** Has attractive, long-lasting fruits that follow on from ephemeral, pale-yellow flowers. 1.5m.

6 ***Punica granatum*** The pomegranate is a classic oases tree; it's resistant to extreme temperatures and its fruits taste sublime. 6m. RHS H3, USDA 8a-11.

7 ***Austrocylindropuntia subulata*** A cactus from Argentina that has a beautiful graphic effect. 4m.

8 ***Gaura lindheimeri* red flowered** This purple-flowering cultivar was introduced by chance into the garden where it grows well. 1.5m. RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.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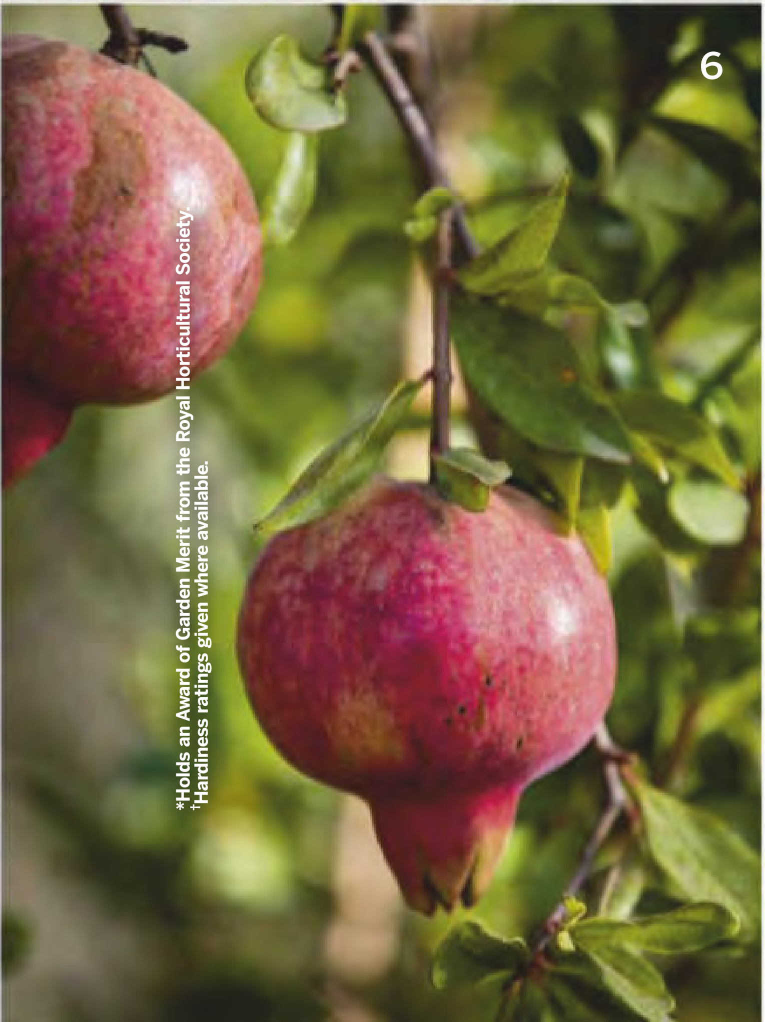
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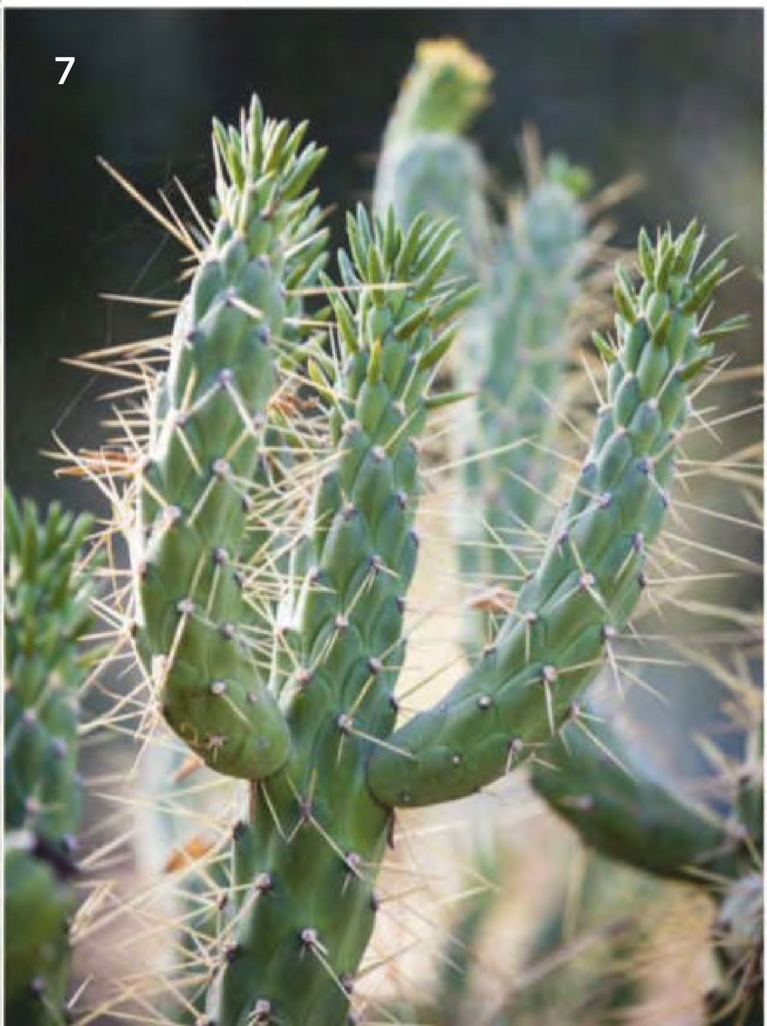
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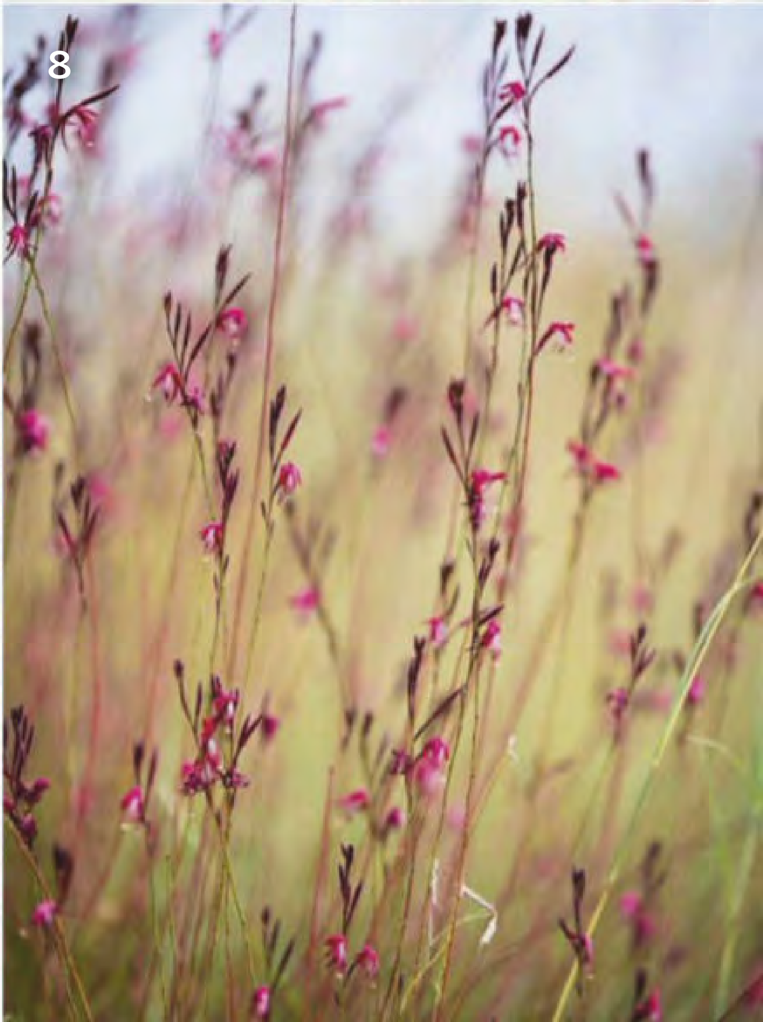
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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

WE PROBABLY SPEND
MORE MONEY
ON THE SOIL THAN
ON THE PLANTS

Clockwise from top left

On warm days this mix of *Helichrysum italicum* and topiarised lemon trees smells heavenly. Arnaud and Eric disapprove of topiary but to their dismay the head gardener here is a fiend with a pair of secateurs.

The spiky *Agave sisalana* growing among the blue cactus *Opuntia robusta* on the side of the driveway was planted in Morocco in the 1930s for its sisal and is now subspontaneous in this area.

A pink-flowered bougainvillea grows among *Jasminum grandiflorum*, the flowers of which are harvested for cosmetic company Yves Saint Laurent Beauté. Both work well with the clone of *Agave americana* in the foreground.

***Lantana camara* 'Avalanche',** the only truly white cultivar and yellow *L. camara* 'Esperanta Lemon' line the path to one of the pavilions. Beyond the spiky forms of *Opuntia robusta* and *Agave americana* contrast with the soft flowers.

▷ much water and you don't have anything that will escape into the wild. These are the universal principles."

Similarly universal is the principle that even the most carefully selected plant will do better if planted into well-prepared soil. Since the ground at Azaran was naturally heavy and further compacted by the building work, before any planting could start it was first improved with the addition of large quantities of sand and sheep manure. "People think that cacti don't need a rich soil, but every plant benefits from better growing conditions," says Arnaud. "It is no exaggeration to say we probably spend more money on the soil than on the plants."

Only once the site had been thoroughly prepared did the young ornamental plants go in, together with masses of sacrificial grasses to create a living sunscreen. This companion planting technique exploits the fact that grasses will grow up quickly and protect the more vulnerable plants as they get established. After a couple of years the grasses die away, by which time the permanent planting is sufficiently established to withstand the rigours of the climate.

In fact the strength of the sun at this latitude is not just a practical issue. It also has a pronounced visual impact. "Light drenches the site and this could have been too much, too strong," says Arnaud. "You need some sense of enclosure to redress the balance, but here the architectural elements were almost too open. We used the pavilions as 'enclosing' walls, and created some sunken terraces. Even if the drop is just 30cm down, it is a powerful way of breaking up a space."

They have also made good use of two sculptural arches designed by the architect. These once stood strangely alone but now rise out of a spiky sea of agaves, setting up a series of vertical points that stand in pleasing contrast to the strong horizontal planes of the twin arches.

Thanks to all that sheep manure, the garden established quickly and now has a rich volume that makes sense of the space. Eric and Arnaud's expertly selected plant palette, impeccable horticulture and exquisite aesthetic judgement have combined to produce a world of quiet magic. The sun still blazes down relentlessly, but now it shines on a perfectly realised world where everything is as it should be. □

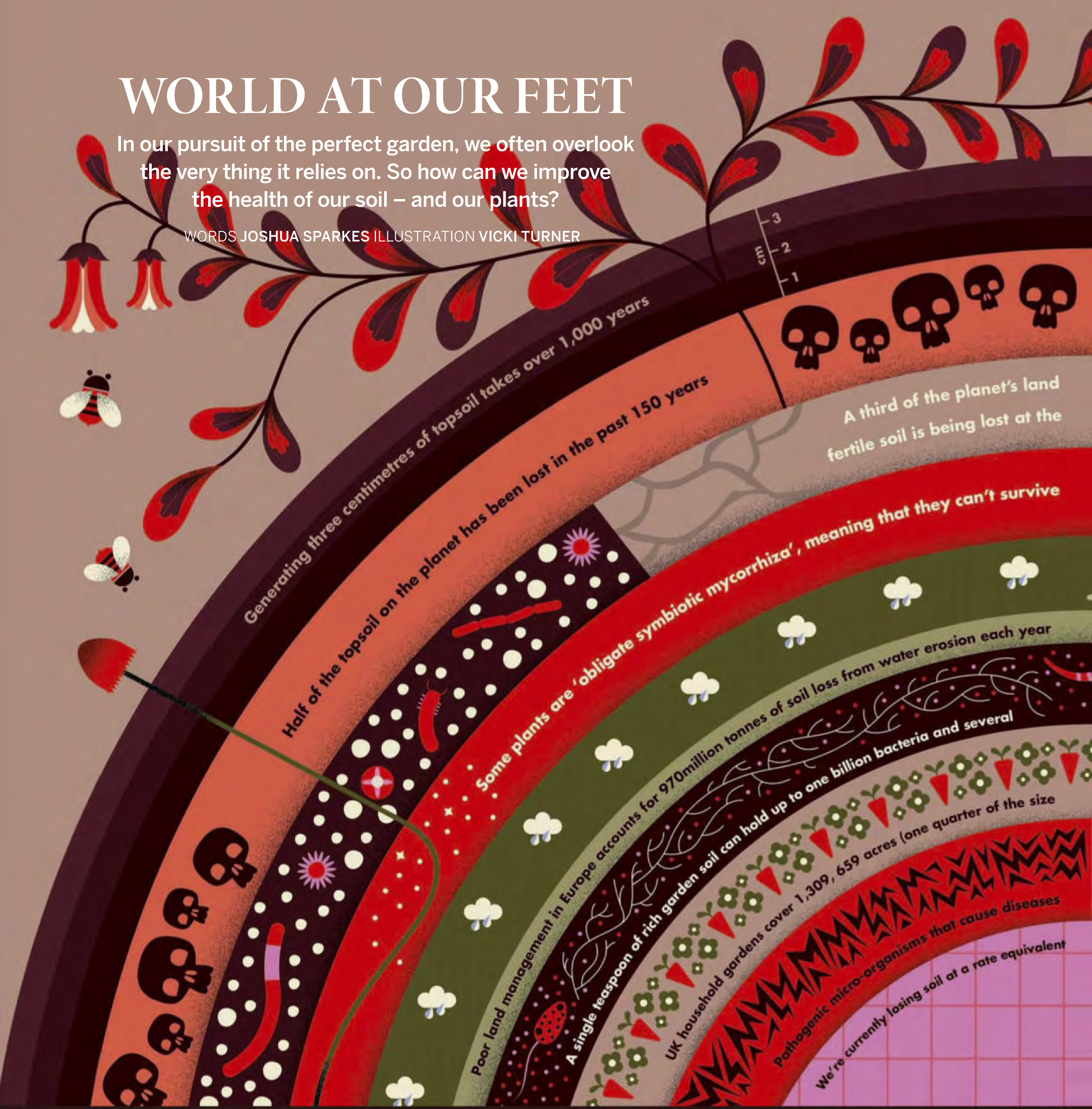
USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Eric and Arnaud's work at **ossart-maurieres.com**

WORLD AT OUR FEET

In our pursuit of the perfect garden, we often overlook the very thing it relies on. So how can we improve the health of our soil – and our plants?

WORDS **JOSHUA SPARKES** ILLUSTRATION **VICKI TURNER**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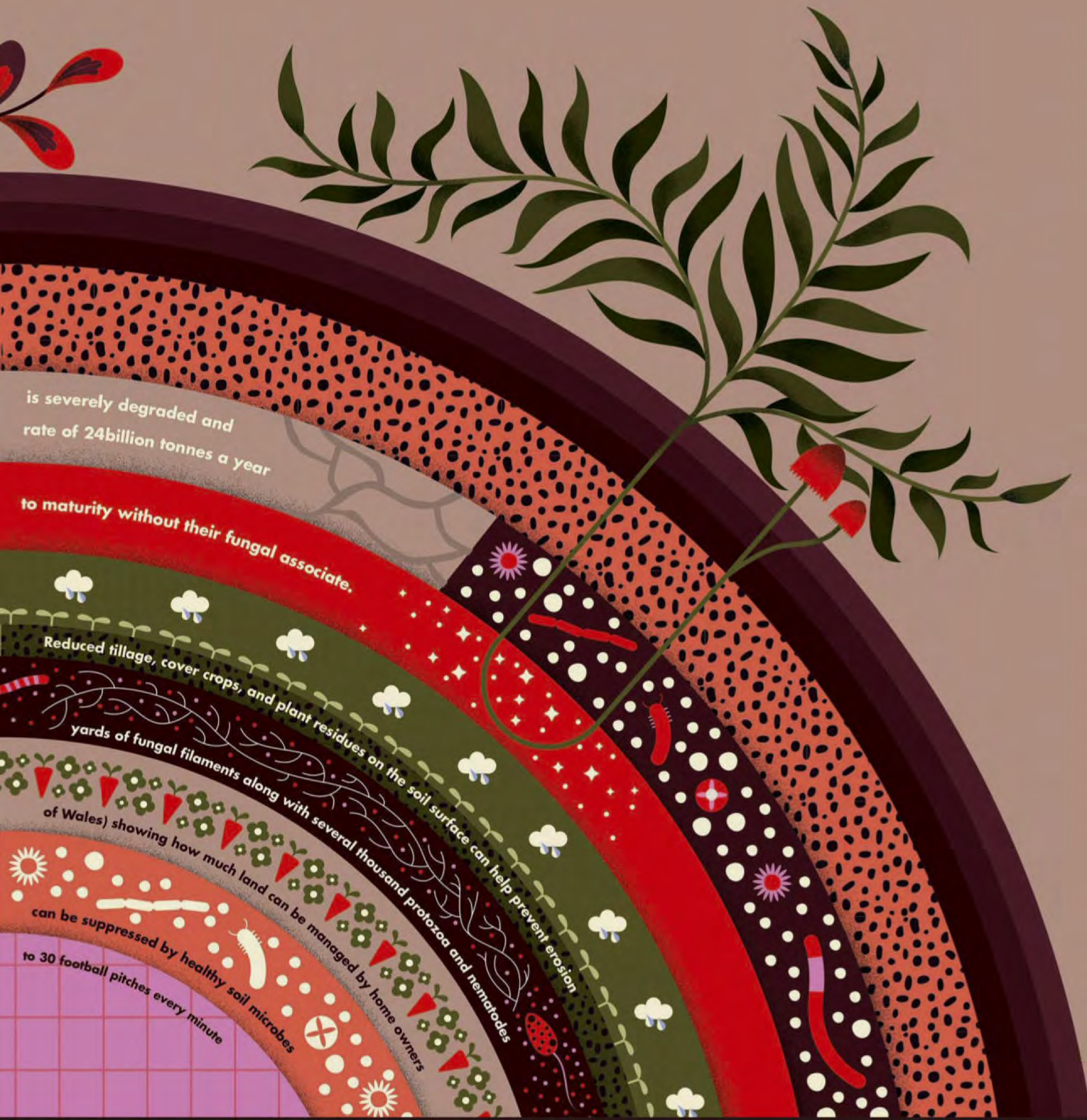
Generating three centimetres of topsoil takes over 1,000 years
Half of the topsoil on the planet has been lost in the past 150 years
A third of the planet's land
fertile soil is being lost at the
Some plants are 'obligate symbiotic mycorrhiza', meaning that they can't survive
Poor land management in Europe accounts for 970million tonnes of soil loss from water erosion each year
A single teaspoon of rich garden soil can hold up to one billion bacteria and several
UK household gardens cover 1,309, 659 acres (one quarter of the size
Pathogenic micro-organisms that cause diseases
We're currently losing soil at a rate equivalent

As gardeners we generally regard our glorious plants and well-tended designs with the utmost pride, but below ground there is a whole other world in our care, a very secret and mysterious one. Perhaps more like a universe, it is this which feeds our gardens, sustains our wildlife and gives us life on this planet, yet we overlook its staggering complexity and importance in our everyday lives. This is the universe of the soil, and more importantly the life within it.

Our soil is under threat on a global scale. Our planet has already lost 70 per cent of its fertile topsoil, mainly through industrial agriculture increasing the rate of erosion. A United Nations report states that globally we are losing 24 billion tonnes of topsoil every year – that's the area of 30 football pitches every minute. A recent government report claims that the UK loses around 2.2 million tonnes of topsoil every year. With this current trajectory we could lose most of our fertile soil in the next 60 years, and it is worryingly most of this damage has only been done in the past 150 years. Among all the doom and gloom, you may be wondering how this relates to you as a gardener.

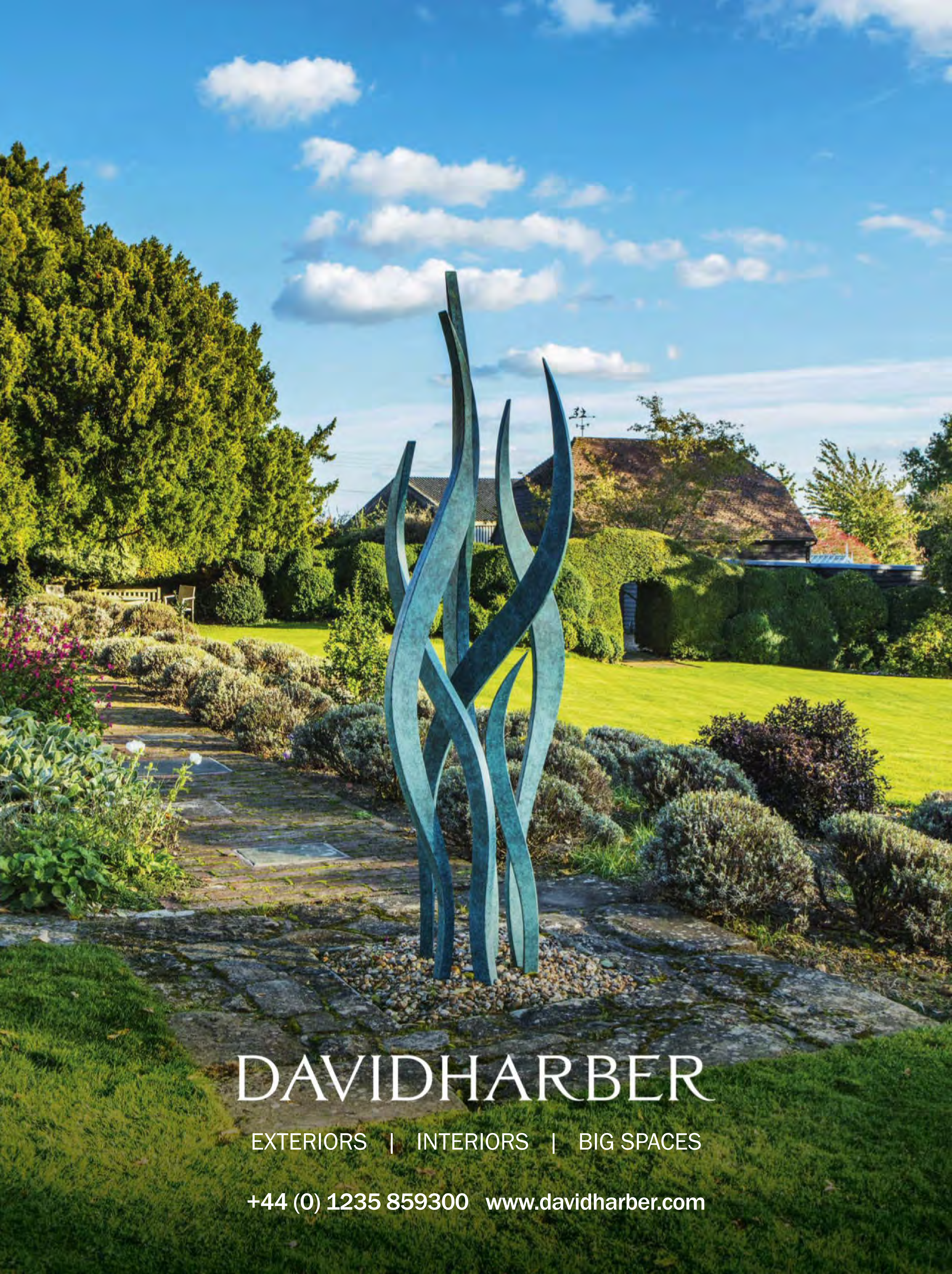
The RHS estimates there are 24 million gardens in the UK and that is an incredible amount of land when added together. It is


is severely degraded and
rate of 24billion tonnes a year
to maturity without their fungal associate.
Reduced tillage, cover crops, and plant residues on the soil surface can help prevent erosion
yards of fungal filaments along with several thousand protozoa and nematodes
of Wales) showing how much land can be managed by home owners
can be suppressed by healthy soil microbes
to 30 football pitches every minute

easy to separate our gardens from the wider environment, to hear the plea of the natural world but sometimes still to act against our better instincts in pursuit of perfection in our own space. But it is in our management of the soil that we can make the most change. By altering our methods and priorities, we can make our gardens healthier for all and change the perceptions of what a good garden should look like. And perhaps the first step to take is to change our idea of what makes a 'perfect' garden.

This is a notion being tested in the USA with many institutions and gardens shifting their idea of what constitutes a 'perfect' lawn. Last year I visited Chicago Botanic Garden, New York Botanical Garden, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Harvard University, Mount Cuba Center in Delaware and Chanticleer in Pennsylvania; not only do all these gardens accept the odd clover in their lawns, but they use its beneficial qualities – retaining nitrogen while providing fodder for emerging queen bumblebees.

In the USA, as in Britain, there is currently a sustainability renaissance. The destruction of soil caused by industrial agriculture has led to great work being carried out in regenerative farming. Both horticulture and agriculture have a lot to teach each other on the topic of sustainability. Research on the regeneration of soil has found its way ▷



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▷ into American horticulture, helping to develop new practices with some amazing results.

Rather than assessing the health of the soil purely in terms of its chemistry – that is, nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium (NPK) – management methods now focus more heavily on the biology of the soil, the microbes, bacteria, protozoa, fungi and other microorganisms. A single teaspoon of rich garden soil can contain up to one billion bacteria and several metres of fungal filaments along with several thousand protozoa and nematodes. A pint of soil can contain as many organisms as all the humans who have ever lived. Each plays a role, with nutrient-rich bacteria being consumed by larger predators (protozoa and nematodes), which in turn release nutrients back into the soil for use by plants.

The use of mycorrhizal fungi in gardening has seen a huge increase, and for good reason. When partnered with a plant, the fungi can increase water uptake by 40 per cent (increasingly relevant as our climate changes) and strengthen the plant to fend off attacks from pathogens. Encouraging the native mycorrhizal fungi in your own garden is likely to give far better results than using the commercial product, as 'native' fungi have higher survival rates when released back into the garden from which they came. In fact, certain places now follow a form of cultivation called Natural Korean Farming (NKF), which is based on the idea, first developed in Korea, of growing and using your own native microbes, especially fungi.

The Chicago Botanic Garden has an entire department dedicated to microbial life in the soil. There is a test plot that tracks the effectiveness of mulches, bio-char and compost extractions in gardens. Compost extractions work by removing a sample of microbial life from compost through an aerobic water system, a process known as 'brewing'. This increases the microbial populations then applied to the soil. The results are directly linked to practical work in the gardens.

Organic fertilisers and liquid feeds such as seaweed provide a good alternative to synthetic fertilisers such as phosphorus. The mining of phosphate rock itself is unsustainable. Soil is damaged during extraction, erosion and compaction result and greenhouse gases are released. Much of the phosphate leaches into water sources, poisoning them and the surrounding soil. In any case, phosphate reserves are predicted to run out by 2030.

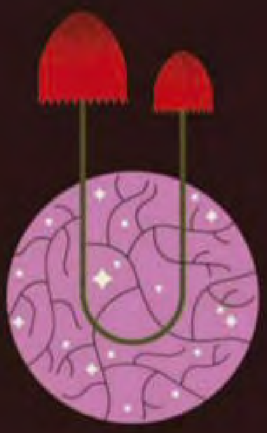
It is now more urgent than ever that we use sustainable practices in our gardens. The one thing we do know is that there is no silver bullet or single answer to any of this. To make our gardens truly sustainable, we must start to question our gardening practices and learn from current research. The universe beneath our feet is very much hidden from us, but if we want our gardens to remain for future generations, we need to start looking deeper. □

USEFUL INFORMATION
Four good books on the subject are *The One-Straw Revolution* by Masanobu Fukuoka (NYRB Classics, 2009), *The Soil Will Save Us* by Kristin Ohlson (Rodale, 2014), *Practical Organic Gardening* by Mark Highland (Quarto, 2017) and *The Biochar Debate* by James Bruges (Green Books, 2009).

NEXT MONTH Joshua offers a practical guide to getting the best from your garden soil.

Top tips for improving your soil

- **Change your attitude to what is 'normal' and what is 'best'.** Forget the idea that plants need constant food from outside sources such as fertilisers and that the soil is incapable of caring for itself. Be happy with the odd clover or spotted leaf.
- **Try to avoid using fungicides on your plants** as this will only damage all the beneficial organisms that you are trying to maintain. This goes for pesticides, too, and – as much as possible – herbicides. These also damage the life within the soil in the long run, creating greater problems for your soil and plants. Instead, build and maintain a healthy population of micro-organisms, fungi, bacteria by using sustainable techniques and allow them to care for your plants as nature intended.
- **Only walk on soil when absolutely necessary, and when you do so, use boards to distribute your weight.** Compaction is one of the most damaging effects on soil, causing it to become anaerobic and to begin to toxify, killing many of the beneficial microbes.
- **Avoid over cultivation, as this will damage the structure** of the soil and tear apart the important fungal system established within it. Try not to cultivate to create a neat look; instead be happy with the fluffy cake-like texture that you get from a healthy soil.
- **Whenever possible, opt for bare-rooted plants and plant them at any time of year.** This will force the plant to establish quickly; it will be far stronger and healthier for it, but do take special care not to damage the roots. Remove the soil, wash the roots and plant into a hole that is no bigger than necessary. Use the potting soil as a mulch around the base of the plant if you wish.



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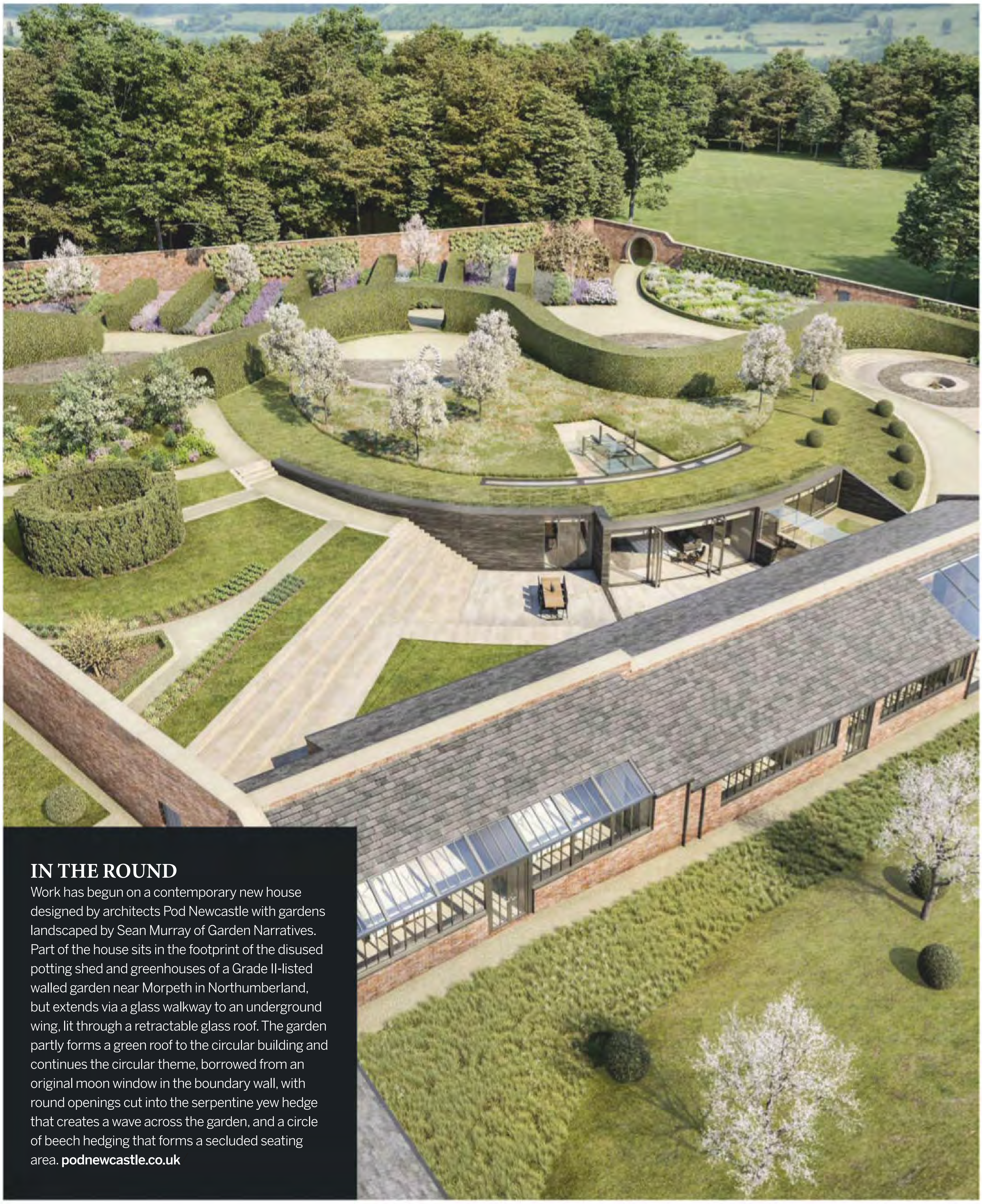
DESIGN

News, trends and sourcebook



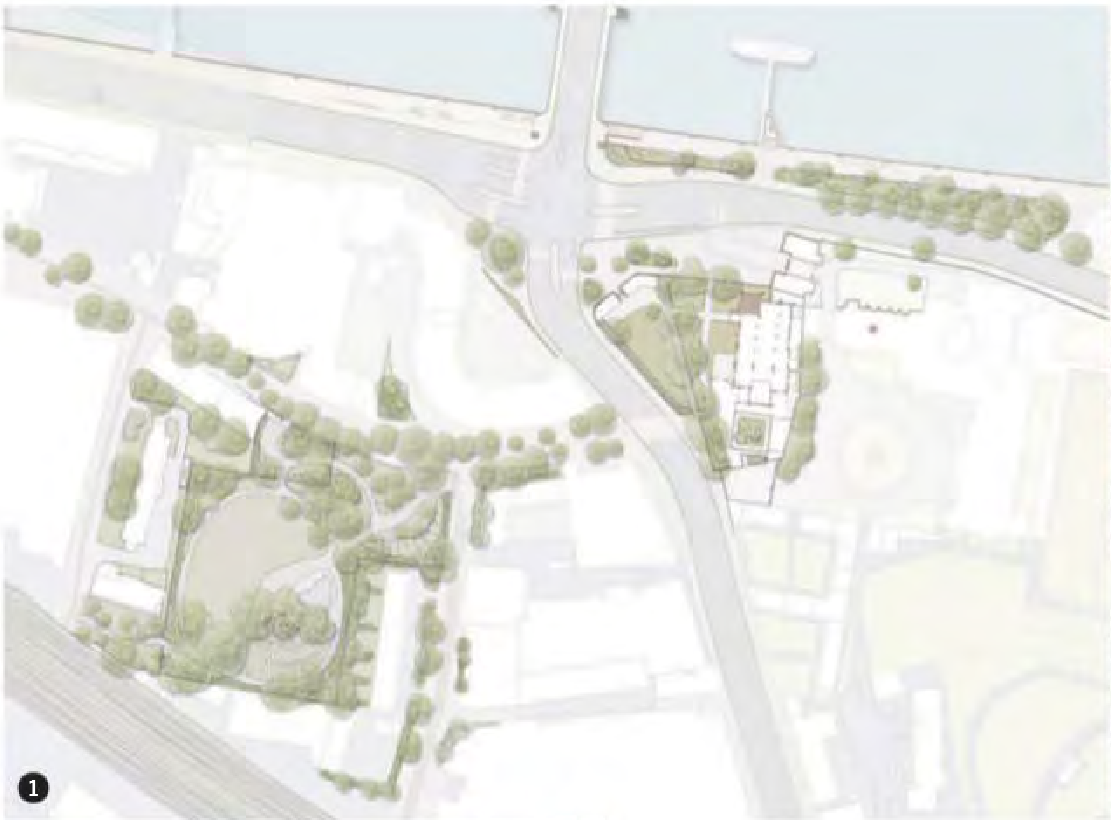
IN THE ROUND

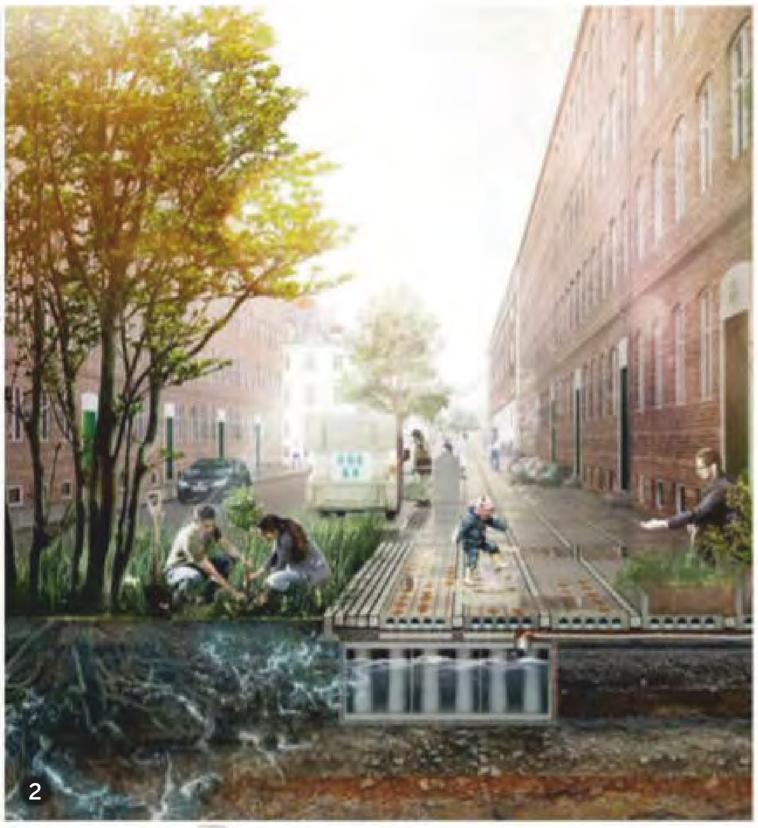
Work has begun on a contemporary new house designed by architects Pod Newcastle with gardens landscaped by Sean Murray of Garden Narratives. Part of the house sits in the footprint of the disused potting shed and greenhouses of a Grade II-listed walled garden near Morpeth in Northumberland, but extends via a glass walkway to an underground wing, lit through a retractable glass roof. The garden partly forms a green roof to the circular building and continues the circular theme, borrowed from an original moon window in the boundary wall, with round openings cut into the serpentine yew hedge that creates a wave across the garden, and a circle of beech hedging that forms a secluded seating area. **podnewcastle.co.uk**

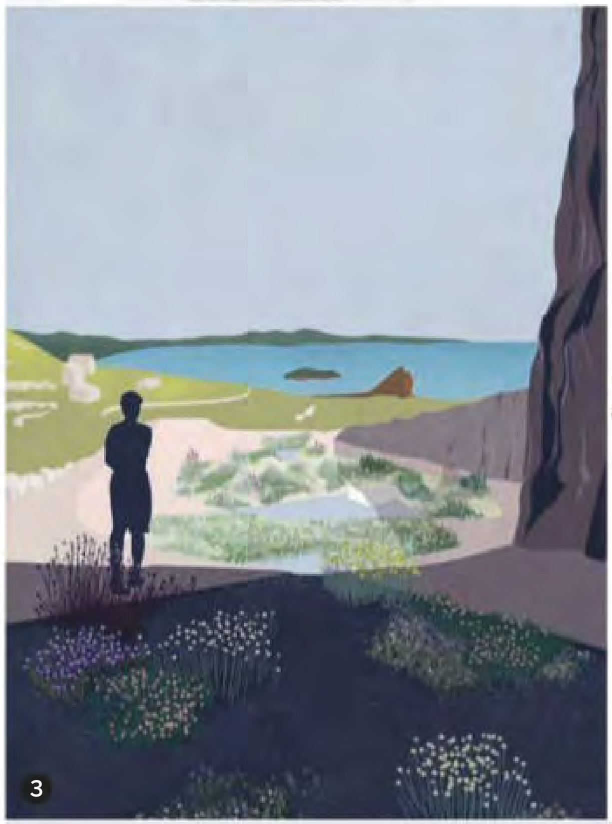
DESIGN

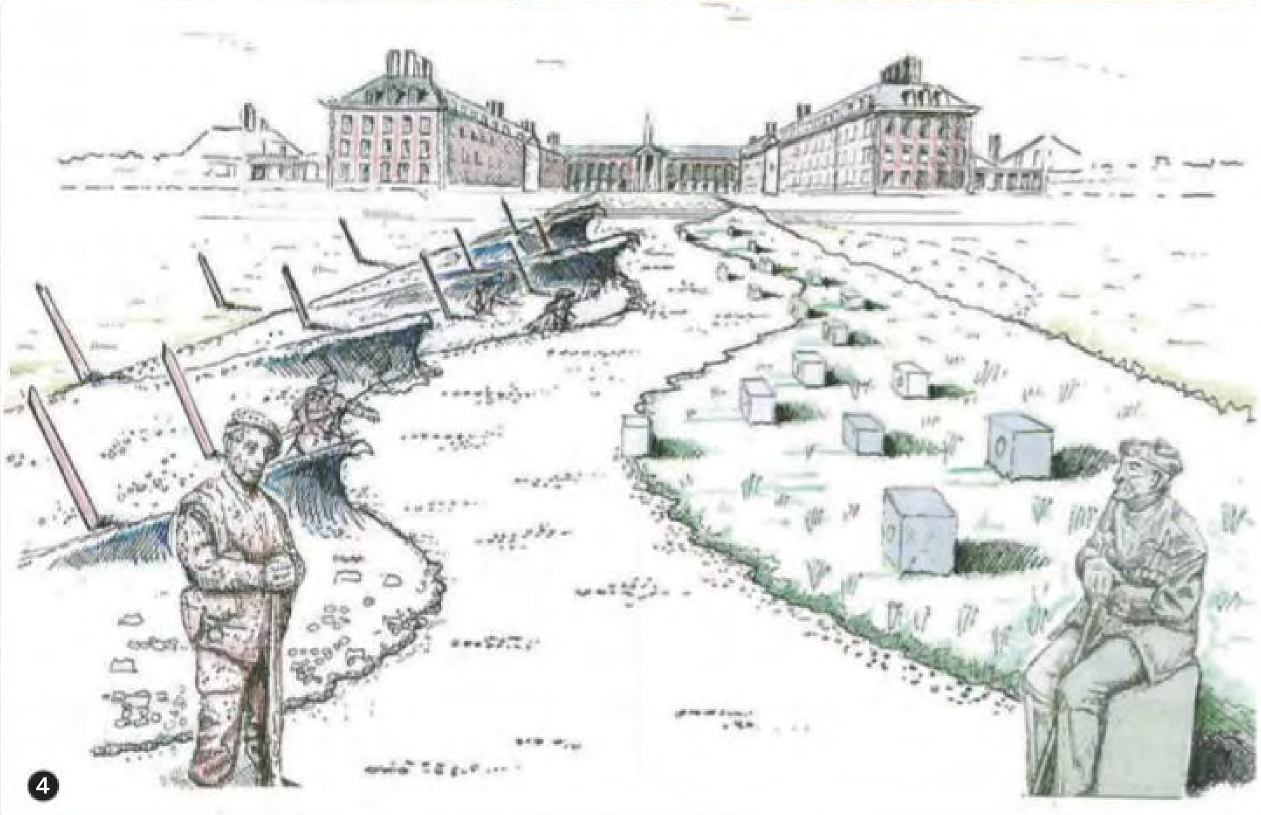
NEWS

COMPILED BY ANNIE GATTI









① LAMBETH GREEN

A proposal to create a new garden and link a series of green spaces between the Thames and Old Paradise Gardens at Lambeth in south London, has been revealed by the Garden Museum. Created by Dan Pearson Studio and urban design and public realm practice Publica, the Lambeth Green scheme will transform St Mary's Garden next to the Museum into a welcoming green space, and include a new entrance structure for the museum. Work on the scheme, which will also include new planting along the Embankment walkway, is expected to begin in 2021. **gardenmuseum.org.uk**

② CLIMATE TILES

Paving tiles that will help control water run-off in cities and prevent flash flooding are now being trialled on a 50m stretch of pavement in Copenhagen. Designed by urban design architects Tredje Natur in collaboration with concrete specialists IBF and drainage specialists ACO Nordic, the Climate Tile has perforations that enable water to drip into collection tanks where it can be stored and diverted, as needed, to areas of planting alongside the pavement. The tile has been in development in Denmark since 2014, and if this pilot trial is successful, Tredje Natur plans to produce it commercially. **tredjenatur.dk**

③ STUDENT AWARD

Five women on Edinburgh College of Art's MLA in Landscape Architecture have won a prestigious award at the 2018 Barcelona International Biennial of Landscape Architecture. The students' diverse portfolio saw their department named Best International Landscape Architecture School. Among the winning projects was Emily Crofton's vision for a series of public gardens (shown) built on the site of a former limestone quarry and a pine plantation in the South of France. Applications for this year's course, which starts in September 2019, are open until August. **eca.ed.ac.uk**

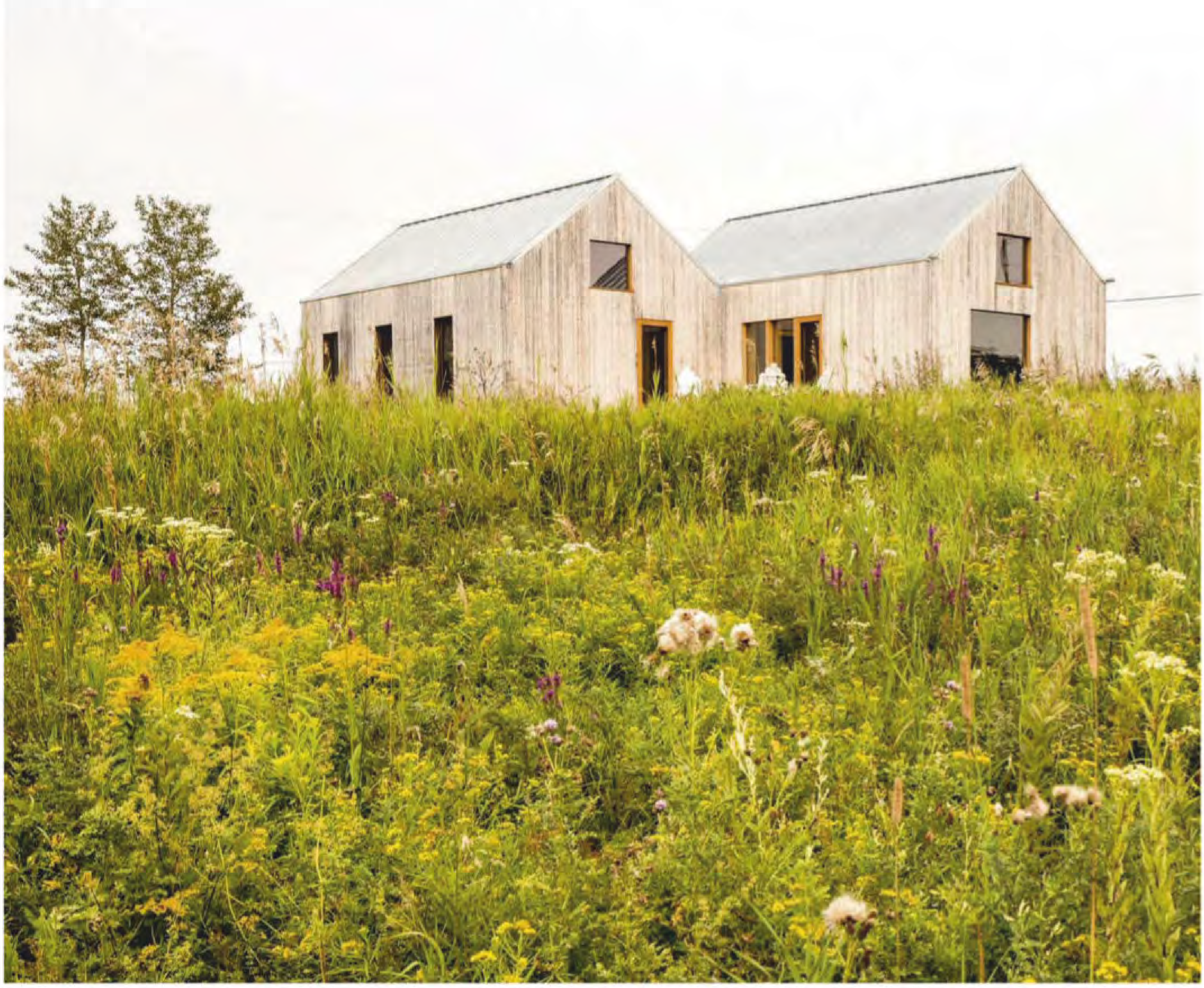
④ D-DAY 75

D-Day Revisited, a charity that supports veterans of the Normandy landings, is hoping to raise £290,000 to create an installation at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Designed by John Everiss, *D-Day 75* will remember the June 1944 invasion in a piece featuring two life-size sculptures of veteran Bill Pendell, who sadly died last month. One in stone, by Thomas Dagnall, will depict Bill in old age, the other in metal, by John Everiss, will capture him as a 22-year-old soldier. Behind the figures, 15 stone plinths, inscribed with the memories of 15 veterans, will be set in a sea of *Armeria maritima* that grew on the wartime beaches. **d-dayrevisited.co.uk**

THIRD NATURE

HOME FROM HOME

Participants in this year's International Garden Festival at Les Jardins de Métis (Reford Gardens), Quebec, will stay in accommodation designed by architects Atelier Pierre Thibault to mirror the shape and form of a garden shed. Built from pale timber and topped with a metallic roof, the twin-gabled La Résidence des Stagiaires, is divided into two wings: one for communal eating and socialising while the other will provide sleeping quarters. Large windows offer views out over the surrounding Reford estate and flood the building with natural light. The 20th edition of the International Garden Festival starts on 22 June, 2019. **internationalgardenfestival.com**



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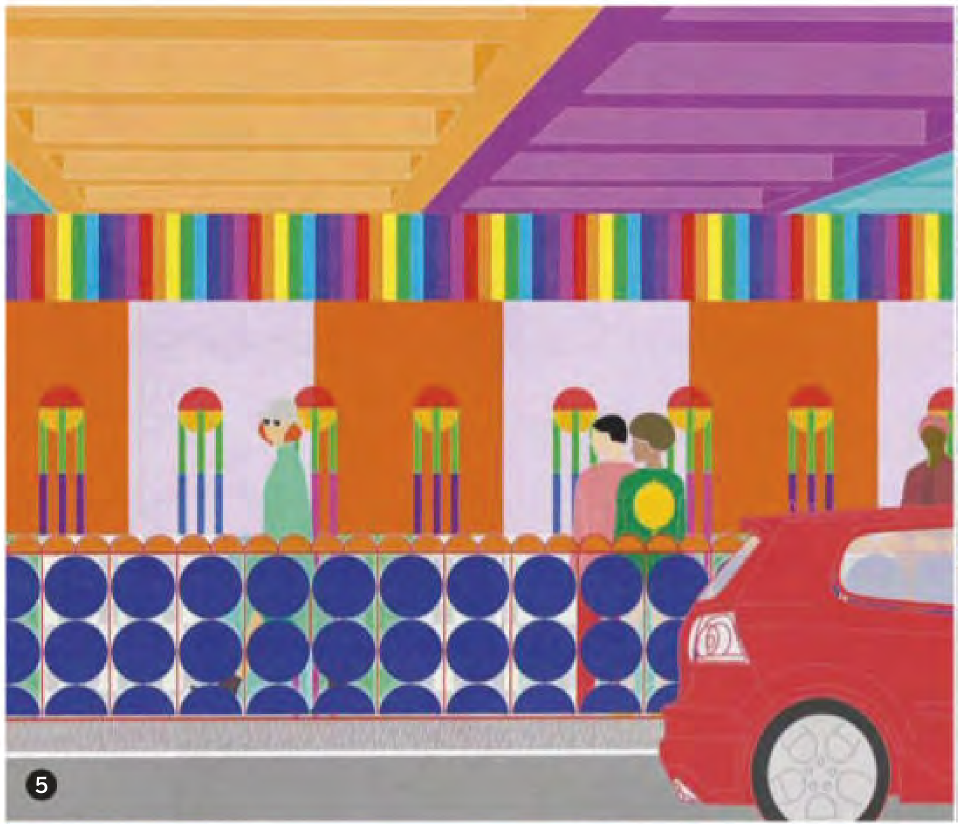
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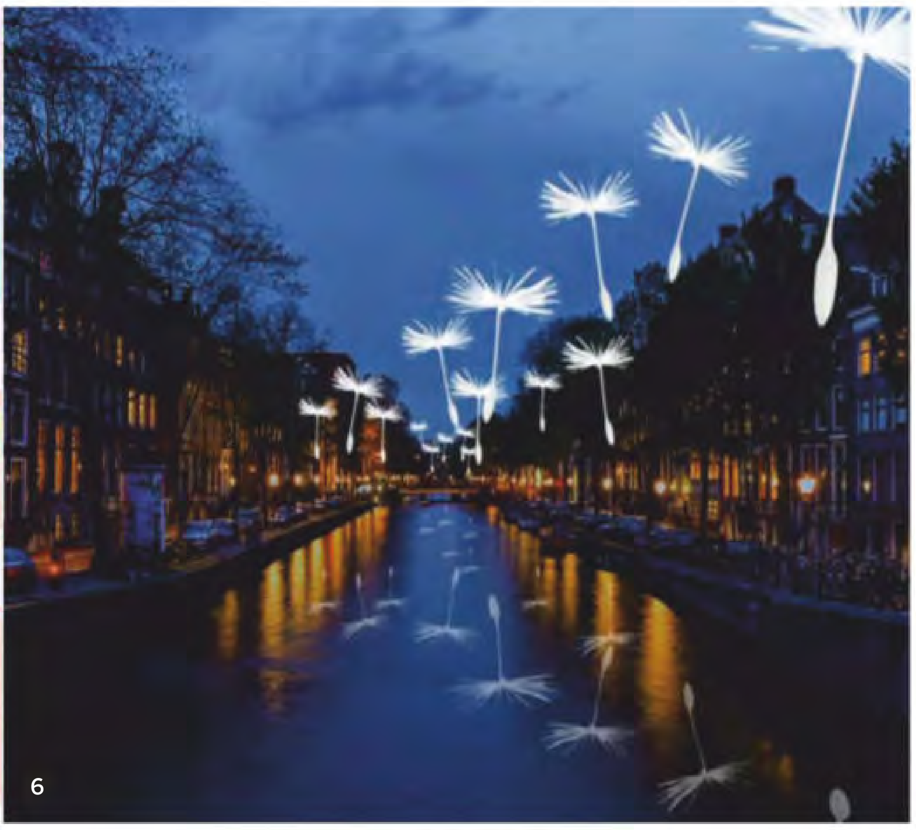
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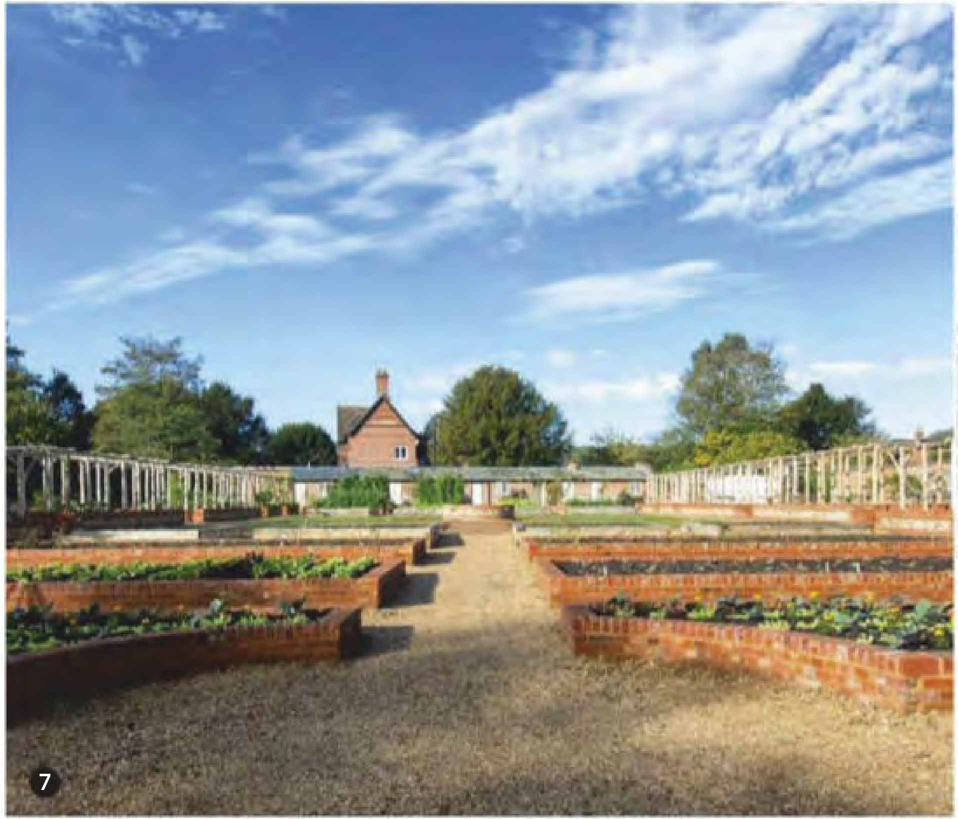
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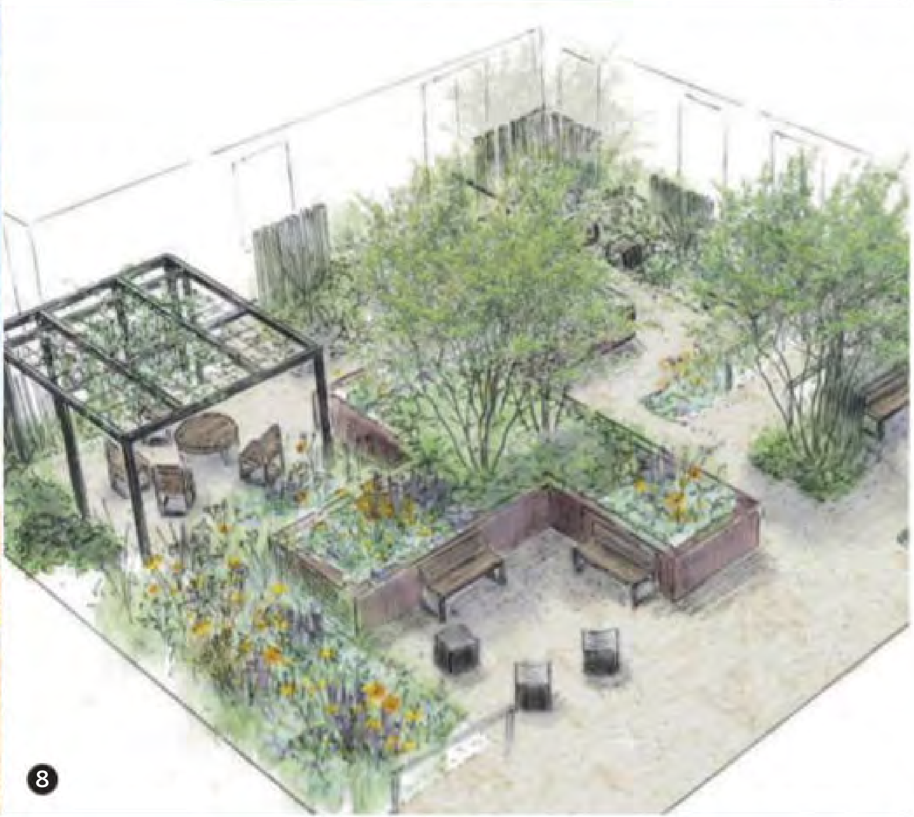
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⑤ FESTIVAL MURAL

London-based artist and designer Yinka Ilori has won a competition organised by the London Festival of Architecture to transform a gloomy underpass in south London. His vibrant design, *Happy Street*, will see the dark space beneath an old railway bridge on Thessaly Road in Wandsworth clad in brightly coloured panels painted with an enamel powder that provides a low-cost, durable and reflective surface. The chosen colours reflect shades seen in sunsets over the river Thames. The mural will be installed in time for the start of the festival on 1 June. **londonfestivalofarchitecture.org yinkailori.com**

⑥ LIGHT ARTISTRY

Twenty dandelion seedheads, each 2m high, are lighting the sky above Amsterdam's Herengracht canal this month as part of the seventh edition of Amsterdam Light Festival. Created by the light designers Merav Eitan and Gaston Zahr of Israel-based OGE Group, the light installation *Light a Wish* captures the moment when a child blows on a seedhead taking seeds and wishes floating out into the world. It is one 30 illuminations by artists, designers and architects from 16 different countries that have been selected for this year's 53-day festival. Until 20 January, at various locations around the city, **amsterdamlightfestival.com**

⑦ KITCHEN GARDEN

The layout of a new kitchen garden in the grounds of Mottisfont Abbey in Hampshire, offers a hint of the National Trust property's medieval monastic past. Designed by head gardener Jonny Norton, the garden is framed by two pergolas, made from re-purposed chestnut, to suggest cloisters and has a central dipping pond fed by four rills made from reclaimed bricks. The pergolas are planted with vines and gourds, and all the plants in the garden are either edible or medicinal, and include herbs popular in medieval times, such as cardoon and lovage. Later this year cold frames will be installed to grow year-round salad leaves. **nationaltrust.org.uk**

⑧ HOSPITAL GARDEN

Planting will begin in spring on Lara Behr's design for a courtyard garden at the new NGS Macmillan Unit at Chesterfield Royal Hospital. Her design sees existing raised beds filled with textured planting from a grass matrix interplanted with shrubs, perennials and bulbs, which will have a purple and white colour scheme in summer, while multi-stem trees will add structure. The garden will also feature enclosed seating spaces, one of which will be framed by a climber-covered wooden pergola. Behr's Macmillan Legacy Garden, which won gold at the RHS Tatton Flower Show in 2017, was also rebuilt at the hospital last year. **macmillan.org.uk**

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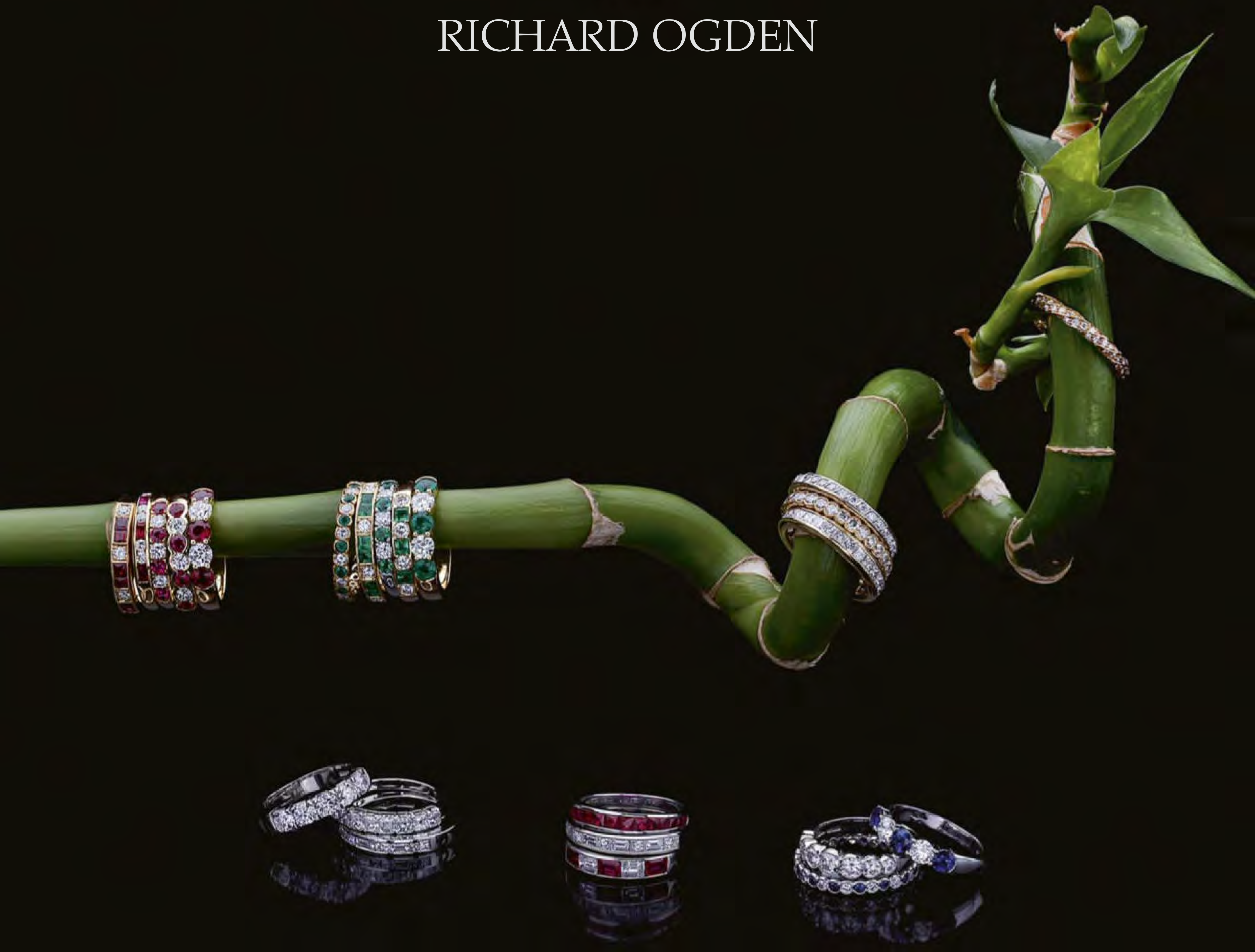

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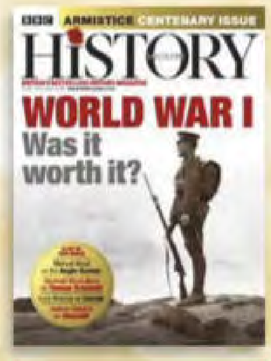
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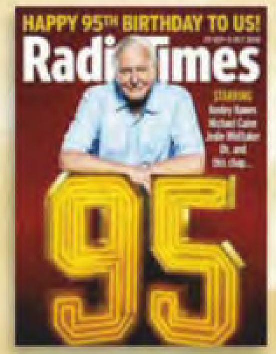
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Design trends 2019

Does what we want from our gardens reflect how we are feeling about the world at large? Leading designers offer their thoughts on the current Zeitgeist in garden design

Jinny Blom

Garden designer

As far as trends are concerned, there is much more focus on removing plastics from our trades. Landscaping is so close to the earth, we see the issues very closely. At present there are no commercial alternatives to plastic plant pots, yet I predict this will change very rapidly in the near future. For starters, at least companies are looking at alternatives, such as simply changing the colour of pots so they can be processed for recycling.

As far as our own work is concerned, we are masterplanning an extraordinary new public project at Waddesdon Manor for the National Trust and The Rothschild Foundation. It will showcase many aspects of horticulture and agriculture, past present and future, along with all sorts of science and lore of plants. It's going to be stunning to see as it brings ancient skills and practices into parallel with the cutting edge of food and plant production. The project reflects very much where we are as a practice.

Emily Erlam

Landscape designer

This is a really exciting time for gardeners and designers as we see a continuing trend towards greening spaces. I notice planting being used to great effect in advertising, as well as in hotels and shops, with public spaces becoming increasingly sophisticated. I also think we will see more planting indoors as we catch up with the thinking in other countries in Europe, and increase our understanding of how plants can help both to clean the air indoors of toxins and release humidity to improve our homes and our working environments.

Clients are searching for softer gardens with a higher proportion of planting and less hard landscaping. We continue to create gardens with rooms with a particular focus on outdoor lounge areas with fires to extend the season. Outdoor kitchens have been popular for a few years now, but traditionally they have been very expensive. It's good to see them becoming more accessible to more people with companies now offering off-the-shelf carcasses that we can employ in a cost-effective way.

We are aware of how much water we are using in gardens and I have several projects that are investigating rainwater and grey water recycling systems for irrigation.

This is just a hunch, but I think (and hope) there will be a revival of rockeries but probably in a more Californian style with exuberant and sculptural planting.

JINNY BLOM
Jinny has created over 250 gardens, both public and private. Her first book The Thoughtful Gardener *was published in 2017.*

EMILY ERLAM
Having started out in television, Emily changed careers and now designs gardens with a strong focus on architecture.

> **There is a shift in emphasis towards design as a transformative process for poeple as well as the space**
>
> CONRAD BATTEN

CONRAD BATTEN
Based in Totnes in south Devon, Conrad creates gardens with a natural aesthetic and form, with recent projects including a cliff-top garden and an olive grove.

CHRIS MOSS
The gardens designed by Chris are characterised by a layering of hard landscaping elements, solid 'green' architecture and a soft overlay of herbaceous planting.

TONY WOODS
Tony's award-winning success includes RHS Young Designer of the Year 2013, a Chelsea gold and a BALI award for a floating pocket park in Paddington.

ANN-MARIE POWELL
As well as running a garden design studio, Ann-Marie enthuses about the benefits and delights of gardening as a TV presenter, regular speaker and writer.

Conrad Batten

Garden designer

There is a shift in emphasis towards design as a transformative process for people, as well as the space. Materials, plants and a maker's spirit forge something far more than a garden – more a life moment or a feel that expresses, enriches and ripples beyond its creation.

Clients talk of feeling rooted in an uncertain time in their lives, others enthuse in the curiosity of exploring life's connections and the launching of ideas a garden can engender. Another client has changed in their need to command the space, delighting in working with chance. One client whispered to me as we watched a teenager daydreaming in a beanbag, 'he hasn't been on his phone all day'.

It's nothing new, but it seems to have grown as a response to the way we live. A search for balance, time out, the real.

Chris Moss

Landscape gardener

Following a year of harsh extremes of weather in the garden, it is becoming even more important to respond to what nature throws at us, and rather than fight against it, to design instinctively. We are increasingly aware that gardens are not created for instant effect but require careful observation, planning and a lot of patience.

As the importance of bio-security becomes more widely publicised, clients are now easily persuaded to choose plants wisely. Rather than searching out specimen plants from abroad, they prefer to support suppliers closer to home and to plant smaller specimens that establish without a dependence on irrigation.

Tony Woods

Garden designer, Garden Club London

Commercial clients are realising the value of well-designed green space and the desirability it can add to a site. We are looking at bringing green space into some very complex urban spaces, which will require a lot of environmental engineering.

Residential clients are living in the same houses for longer and showing more interest in specimen planting and are more willing to express their personal taste in the garden rather than worrying what an estate agent would think, which was what seemed to dominate garden design for a few years.

Oh, and the patterns of crazy paving are back but in a refined format often using sawn stone and geometric shapes.

With plants, alpines are serving a fantastic purpose in drought-tolerant planting and are gaining popularity, which I think comes from a cross-over with the succulents craze.

Ann-Marie Powell

Garden designer

Environment is playing a huge part in our clients' garden aspirations – I first noticed 'the windscreen phenomenon' a few years ago while driving with my children; my windscreen remained clear of bugs even on motorways, alerting me to the alarming decline in insects in Britain – a fact wildlife experts have been warning of for decades.

Trend is not the right word, more an awakening in the public's psyche – we've seen an uplift in client requests for gardens that invite nature in – meadows, plants for pollinators and ponds are now requested in almost all our gardens, culminating in the huge wildlife garden my practice is designing beside the new National Centre for Horticultural Science and Learning, on the Hilltop at RHS Wisley, opening in spring 2020. I'm keen to demonstrate ways in which we can support common British wildlife.

Tim Richardson

Writer and garden critic

Garden style tends to move in cycles of decades and half decades – so it is perhaps a little difficult to identify changes year on year. However, it can be observed that among those many designers whose work has been influenced by the naturalistic 'new perennial' style, there is a continuing move back towards more complexity in planting schemes by means of repeat groups of plants, a credo that can be traced back to William Robinson and his 1870 publication *The Wild Garden*, as well as more of an emphasis now on shrubs (including roses) and small trees such as *Cornus* and *Malus*.

Grasses are less popular than they were and are more often used as interplantings rather than as defining points, while the importance of a sense of rhythm in planting has now largely superseded ideas around colour theory.

Debbie Roberts and Ian Smith

Garden designers, Acres Wild

It may be a reflection of these uncertain times but we're increasingly meeting clients who want to put down roots, rather than moving on in few years' time. They have found their 'forever home' and so want a garden that is timeless and enduring.

Clients are more visually literate now with access to apps such as Pinterest, Instagram and Houzz and are learning to understand simplicity of design and the subtle effects of light, colour and texture – and to appreciate these within the garden.

Creating a feeling of comfort and wellbeing is a high priority for many people and enjoying the natural world as expressed in the garden is increasingly understood as a way to access this.

Lodewijk Baljon

Landscape architect

Denser urbanisation calls for a more intense use of green, on roofs and façades obviously, but also sophisticated planting in pockets between buildings. This requests a fittingly powerful landscape image.

The naturalistic aesthetic of perennials and ornamental grasses, that is now also entering public space, will stay with us for some time. Quite rightly, too – because it is colourful, has visual interest through the seasons, and has ecological merits.

Where once the flowering meadow was the inspiration, we are now looking for the equivalent in woody planting that will allow us to develop urban landscapes that give an authentic green experience. Multi-stem trees are particularly suitable, showing off their twisted stems, and being reliable on rooftops.

Luciano Giubbilei

Garden designer

It's difficult to stay with trends but I increasingly realise the importance of time in my work – the time to connect deeply with a site and then the protracted period required for planting, observing and adjusting the planting. A garden emerges from a whole series of extended dialogues and narratives and none of these can be rushed.

Although I could never replace the value of books, Instagram has grown increasingly significant for me in recent years. It is a resource I turn to daily, both for design inspiration – I am completely captivated by the beautiful photographs – and as a way of archiving my own encounters. Gardens are dynamic and transient; Instagram champions these traits, allowing you to document and communicate seasonality, process, and transformation.

More and more, it is less about the finished product, or a static goal, especially when thinking about the lifespan of a garden. The merit is in the pursuit, and the interactions that arise along the way.

> **Where once the flowering meadow was the inspiration, we are now looking for the equivalent in woody planting**
>
> LODEWIJK BALJON

TIM RICHARDSON

Tim is a well-known voice in the world of garden design, his interests stretching from the 17th-century English Landscape movement to today's avant gardeners.

DEBBIE ROBERTS AND IAN SMITH

The Acres Wild duo have created gardens throughout the UK and internationally with gardens in France, Spain and California.

LODEWIJK BALJON

Based in the Netherlands, Lodewijk is an expert in public park design, combining beauty and usability alongside the character of a place.

LUCIANO GIUBBILEI

Born in Italy but now based in London, Luciano's gardens are defined by a consideration of both nature and culture, drawing on a wide range of inspirations.

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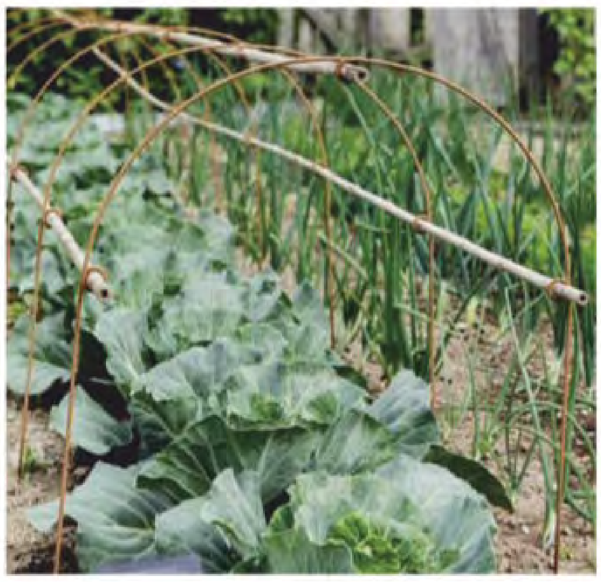
SOURCEBOOK

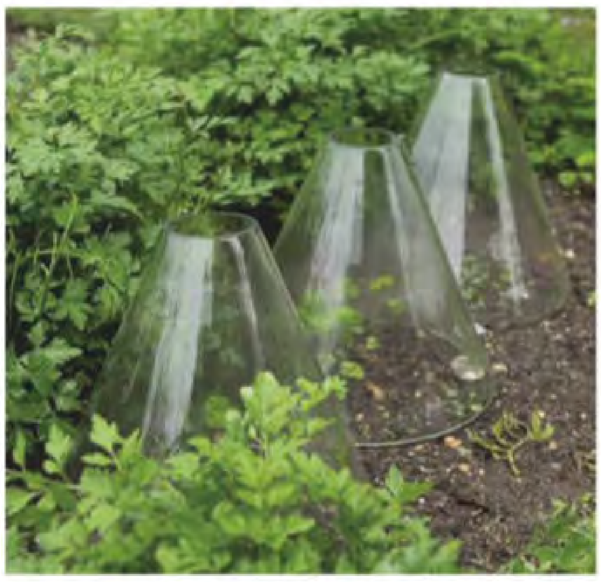
Cloches

Nine designs to prepare for and protect young plants

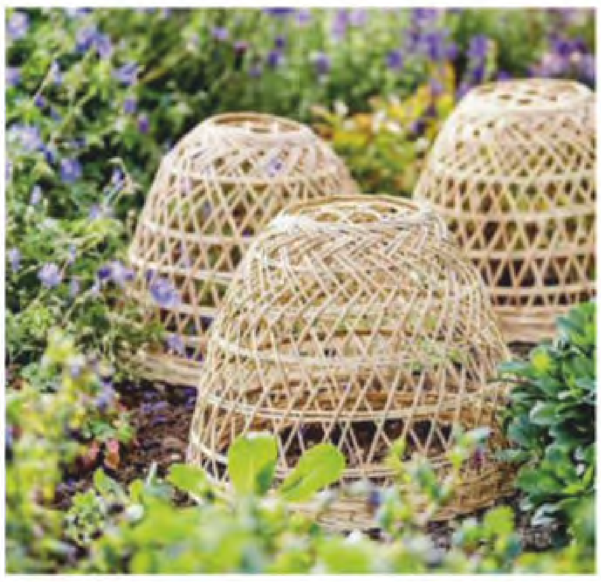
COMPILED BY ALYS HURN



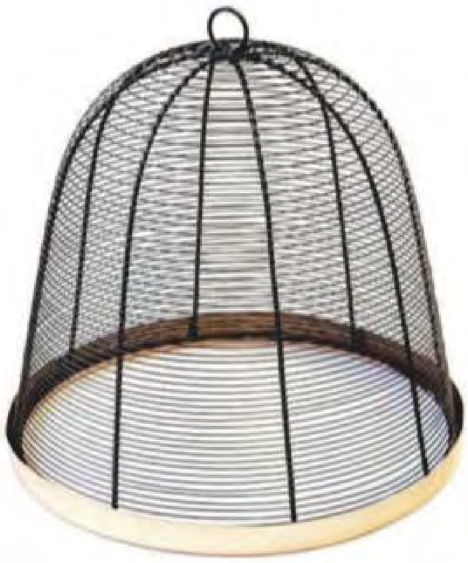
TUNNEL VISION
Cloche Hoops, pack of 5,
From £22 for small tunnel cloche, Plant Belles,
01363 84514, plantbelleshop.co.uk



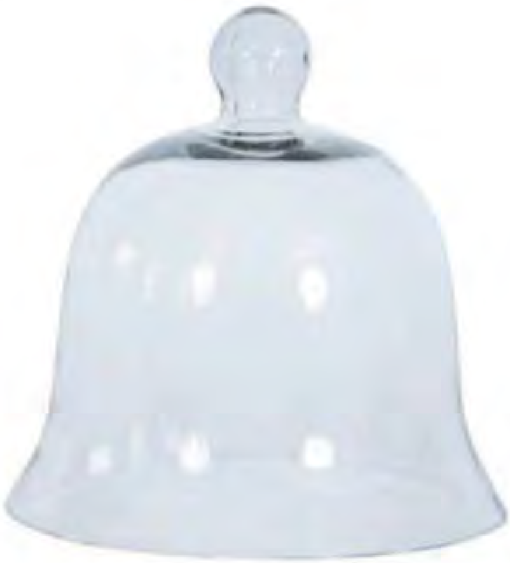
DISCREET
Open Topped Glass Cloche,
£22.99 each, Crocus,
01344 578111, crocus.co.uk



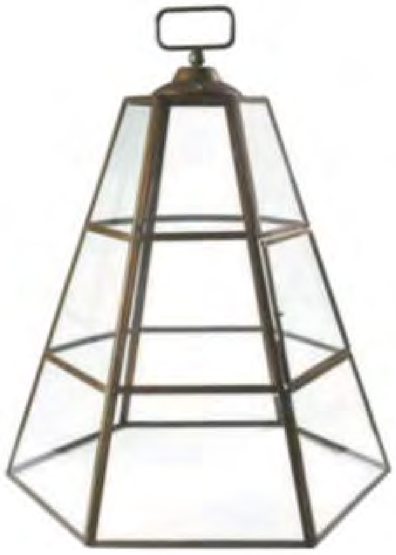
SUSTAINABLE MATERIAL
Large Bamboo Plant Covers,
£45 for a set of three, Sophie Conran,
0333 240 1228, sophieconran.com



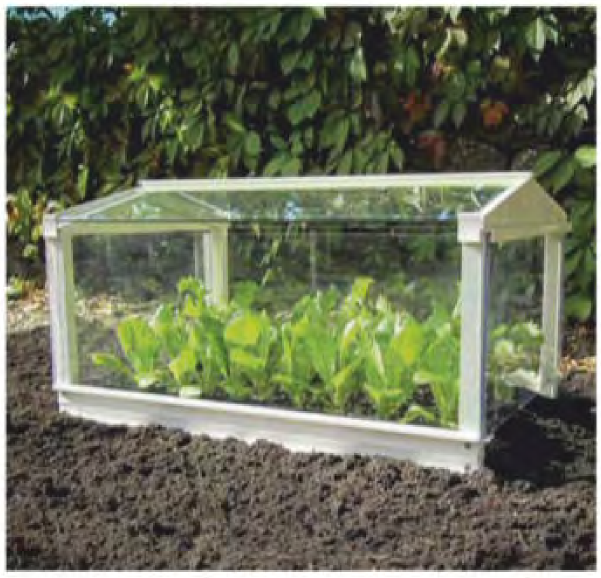
SLUG REPELLENT
Copper Rimmed Cloche, bronze,
£31.99, Waitrose Garden,
01344 578811, waitrosegarden.com



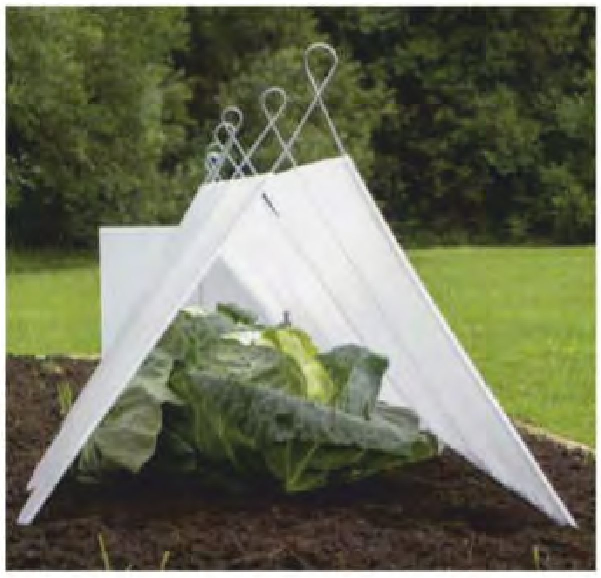
TRADITIONAL GLASS
Small Victorian Glass Bell Jar,
£19.99, Agriframes,
0117 934 1790, agriframes.co.uk



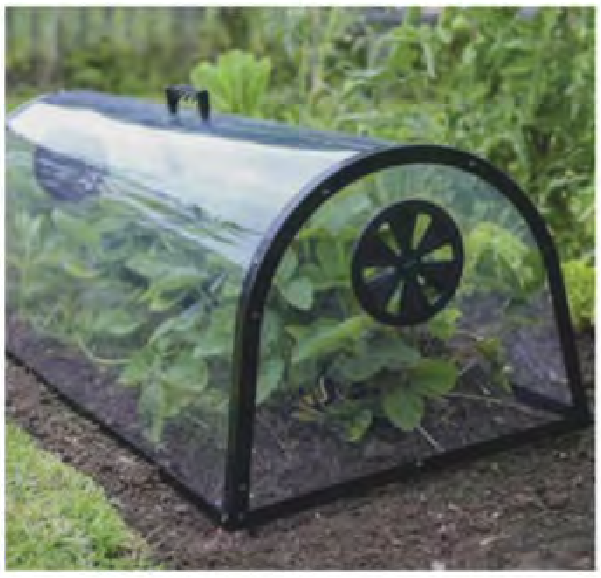
DECORATIVE
Velmont Priory Copper and Glass Cloche,
£109.99, Black Country Metalworks,
0800 6888 386, blackcountrymetalworks.co.uk



COUNTRY STYLE
Salad Cloche,
From £159, Sarah Raven,
0345 092 0283, sarahraven.com



SPACE SAVING
Traditional Cloche,
£24.75, Two Wests & Elliott,
01246 451077, twowests.co.uk



VENTILATION CONTROL
Kitchen Garden Cloche,
£49.95, The Worm that Turned,
0345 605 2505, worm.co.uk

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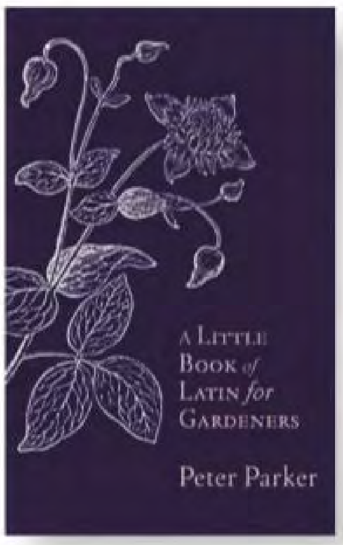
DOWNTOOLS

Book reviews, crossword, back issues

HAARKON, THE KIBBLE PALACE, GLASGOW BOTANIC GARDENS

The Kibble Palace – built in the 1860s as a private conservatory for engineer John Kibble – at Glasgow Botanic Gardens features in *Glasshouse Greenhouse* by India Hobson and Magnus Edmondson, reviewed on page 105.

BOOK REVIEWS



A LITTLE BOOK OF LATIN FOR GARDENERS

by Peter Parker

Little Brown, £12.99
ISBN 978-1408706169

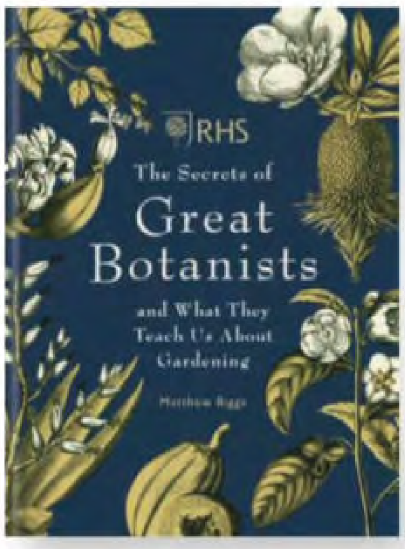
A discursive and informative introduction to botanical Latin and a fun exploration of the history of naming of plants.

Reviewer Rory Dusoir is a Kew-trained gardener and writer.

Botanical Latin is an almost unique remnant of an age when Latin was the common language among European scholars. Many may lament its continued use, but there really is no alternative – to insulate scientific names from the constant flux in usage that characterises a living language, it makes perfect sense that they are written in a dead one. And the famously terse nature of the Ancient Roman tongue makes it particularly suitable, somehow, for the extraordinary feat of compression that is required to describe a living organism in no more than two words.

Pithy it may be, but of course Latin has been no less subject to the contortions of etymology than any other language. To this base has been applied a disjointed layer of botanical research approximately two millennia deep; it is hardly surprising that the results can sometimes be bewildering. Botanical Latin is an ancient battlefield, strewn with the vagaries of human knowledge and of vegetable behaviour – and we should all be thankful to an author who has broached this chaotic scene with relish and does a great job of sharing his enthusiasm for the subject.

A Little Book of Latin has not been written to rival Stearn's imperious *Dictionary of Plant Names for Gardeners*. Although there are short glossaries of relevant specific names at the end of each chapter, the author does not attempt anything remotely comprehensive in terms of defining the Latin (or Latinised Greek) words used in plant names. Instead this is a lively, discursive introduction to the essentials of botanical Latin, a highly readable account that relishes the tortuous byways of a language and of scientific endeavour.



THE SECRETS OF GREAT BOTANISTS

by Matthew Biggs

Mitchell Beazley/RHS, £15.99
ISBN 978-1784724979

Profiles of pioneering botanists past and present, including plant hunters, collectors and breeders as well as scientists, writers and painters.

Reviewer Stephanie Mahon is editor of the Garden Design Journal.

'Botanists are not just white-coated scientists who spend their lives in laboratories, squinting down microscopes at the cells of plants,' writes author Matthew Biggs in his introduction. 'They are the explorers, the trailblazers and the inventors.'

Biggs has selected 35 eminent exemplars, from Pedanius Dioscorides to 'green wall' inventor Patrick Blanc, to show the enormous influence their study of plants has had on the world as we know it. Those chosen represent a broad range of achievements and impacts, and include such famous horticultural leviathans as Carl Linnaeus, Gregor Mendel, Ernest Wilson and Joseph Banks.

But there are also captivating stories of lesser-known personages, including Nikolai Vavilov, creator of the first ever seed bank; William Dampier, a 17th-century pirate who wrote the first recipe in English for guacamole; and Mikinori Ogisu, who among other amazing feats rediscovered a legendary wild rose on a dare by rose expert Graham Thomas.

I enjoyed reading about Jeanne Baret, who posed as a boy to serve as botanical assistant on de Bougainville's 1766 expedition, thereby becoming the first woman to circumnavigate the globe; Anna Atkins, who produced the first book illustrated by photographs; and EK Janaki Ammal, who was the first woman to hold a PhD in botany in the US and is known for developing high-yielding, sweeter cultivars of sugar cane.

Every profile has beautiful botanical illustrations, and is followed by a section, detailing relevant plants and extra tidbits that can be used as a jumping off point for your own gardening practice. A perfect bedtime book to dip in and out of on a cold winter night.

Glasshouse
Greenhouse

GLASSHOUSE GREENHOUSE

by India Hobson and
Magnus Edmondson

Pavilion Books, £22
ISBN 978-1911595694

A book that will appeal to anyone who wishes to plan – either in their head or in real life – a tour of the world's most stunning glasshouses.

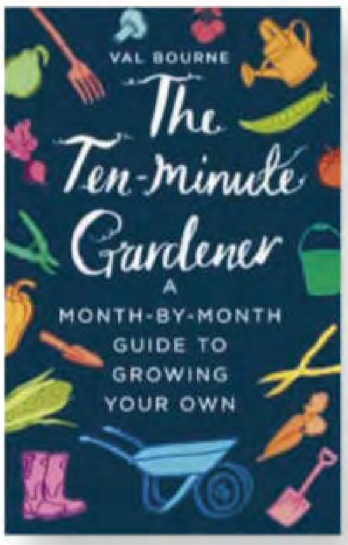
Reviewer Jane Perrone is a broadcaster and garden writer.

Instagram is now home to a growing community of houseplant growers who share their plant 'shelfies'. Haarkon, the collective name for Indian Hobson and Magnus Edmondson, has garnered more than 200,000 followers, making them the UK's top 'plant influencers'. Their new book catalogues their travels around the world in pursuit of what they call 'the ultimate botanical pedestal', the glasshouse.

They have photographed more than 30 locations for the Haarkon Greenhouse Tour, as they call it. Each stop is grouped by type; under 'architecture' comes spacious domes of The Kibble Palace at Glasgow Botanic Gardens and the Adelaide Bicentennial Conservatory, while under 'pleasure' you'll find the Barbican Conservatory in London and the Cloud Forest in Singapore. More humble hothouses get a look-in too, including a DIY allotment greenhouse in Sheffield.

Alongside sumptuous images of immense corrugated leaves and spiky columnar cacti runs a text that offers up some of the context and history of each glasshouse, as well as the couple's reflections written in the collective 'we'. They really are a team: if ever they disagreed about which fern to photograph, there's no hint.

Green is the dominant colour ('foliage is king', Haarkon declares), and the book's matte paper lends the beautiful, technically accomplished photographs a distinct patina that echoes the aesthetic of many an Instagram plant image. The book lacks meticulously detailed captions packed with botanical Latin, but that's not really its point: its dreamy, contemplative feel will transport the houseplant lover to the warm fug of a greenhouse on the coldest winter day.



THE TEN-MINUTE GARDENER: A MONTH-BY-MONTH GUIDE TO GROWING YOUR OWN

by Val Bourne

Bantam Press, £9.99
ISBN 978-1787631069

A month-by-month guide to growing your fruit, vegetables and flowers from one of the UK's leading garden writers.

Reviewer Caroline Beck is a garden writer and cut-flower grower.

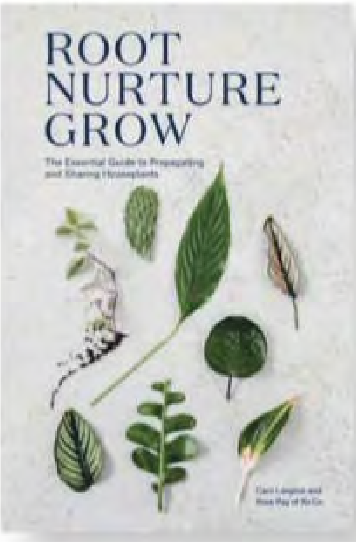
When I first saw this book's title I winced, because using time as a yardstick by which to garden is surely to miss the point (and is impossible anyway, unless you have a window box). But Val Bourne has been gardening her whole life, and is the author of many invaluable books on the subject, some of which I have on my shelves, so to judge a book by its title would be churlish.

The Ten Minute series of books of which this is the fourth – the other three being on fruit, vegetable, and flower growing – come from a series of weekly columns in *The Daily Telegraph*. It's a month-by-month compendium of jobs and practical tips, most of them based on chemical-free and organic principles, and plenty of hard won knowledge. And you don't need to do every single recommended task each month – you'd never leave your garden if you did – so it would suit anyone from a keen novice to someone more experienced looking to expand their knowledge.

However I doubt if there is one single job in here that will take you ten minutes (there is a section on double digging – really? Not on my northern soil and certainly not in less than two days – one for the digging, the second for the osteopath's appointment).

The title is a shame because it is a genuinely useful book, handily pocket sized for when you go to the allotment or kitchen garden, but it might tempt people into thinking that all this is easy and quick.

It isn't, but that doesn't mean it's not worthwhile and hugely satisfying as Val makes clear, but then if it were called *Graft* I suppose it would be passed over in favour of other more snappily entitled books that non-gardening publishers have dreamed up.



ROOT, NURTURE, GROW: THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO PROPAGATING AND SHARING HOUSEPLANTS
by Caro Langton and Rose Ray

Quadrille Publishing, £18
ISBN 978-1787132184

Practical DIY projects for new gardeners, showing how to better nurture, display and propagate houseplants.

Reviewer Lucy Bellamy is the editor of Gardens Illustrated.

Caro Langton and Rose Ray, the stylists and owners of the indoor urban greening company Ro Co, began selling houseplants on Broadway Market after inheriting a glasshouse on Hampstead Heath. In 2016, they wrote *House of Plants*, an introduction houseplants and in this, their second book, they 'share, swap and celebrate methods of multiplying', aka propagation.

Root, Nurture, Grow is written for new gardeners and it takes an inspirational, practical approach. The book emphasises vegetative propagation methods; there are chapters on stem and leaf cuttings, grafting, division, runners and offsets plus a useful indoor plant propagation table that outlines the best propagation techniques for over 70 genera. The propagation methods are described in detail and accompanied by step-by-step photographs that make it seem simple and straightforward.

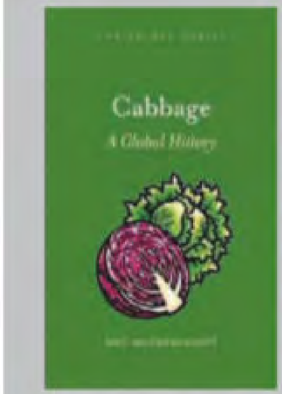
There are wider craft projects in the book, such as making a fishbone cactus leaf-inspired copper mobile. These are arranged concurrently with the information on propagation techniques. This is a very approachable book.

The authors champion a 'more natural' approach, recommending, for example, cinnamon or honey as rooting agents, citing their anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties, although finding fresh, young salix shoots to make willow tea will prove challenging for the casual indoor gardener.

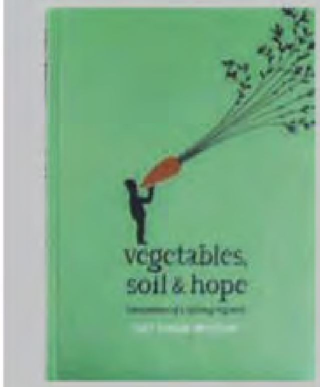
Growing houseplants is often cited as the gateway to 'proper' horticulture for new gardeners, and perhaps it is. I'm not sure it particularly matters, as both enthusiastic crafters and fledgling horticulturlists will enjoy this fun and insightful book.

Other books

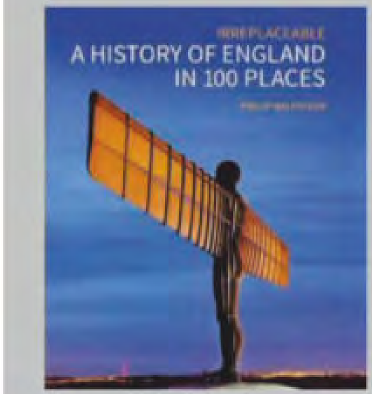
The best of the rest includes a guide to Nordic cocktails, two books celebrating vegetables and a plant hunter's adventure.



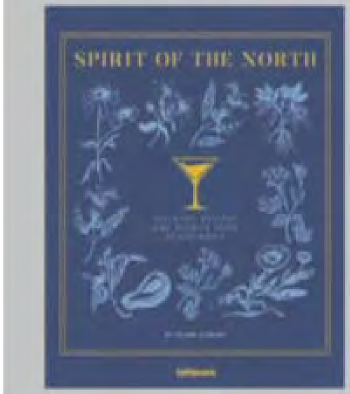
CABBAGE: A GLOBAL HISTORY
by Meg Muckenhoupt
Reaktion Books, £10.99
ISBN 978-1780239811
This compact book explores the history of the cabbage and its place as an iconic ingredient on the world's culinary stage.



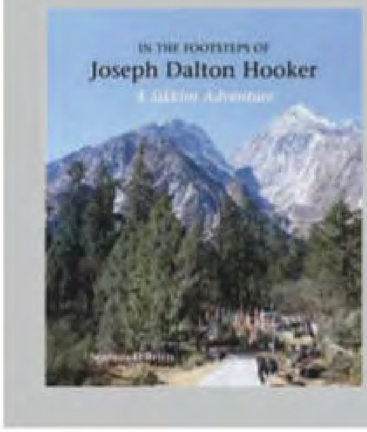
VEGETABLES, SOIL AND HOPE
by Guy Singh-Watson
Riverford Organic, £9.99
ISBN 978-0993215520
Guy Singh-Watson co-owns Riverford Organic with his employees, This is a one-stop-shop for his foreward-thinking ideas on veg growing.



IRREPLACEABLE: A HISTORY OF ENGLAND IN 100 PLACES
by Philip Wilkinson
Historic England, £20
ISBN 978-1848025097
A list of England's most eminent locations from well-known parks and monuments to hidden gems.

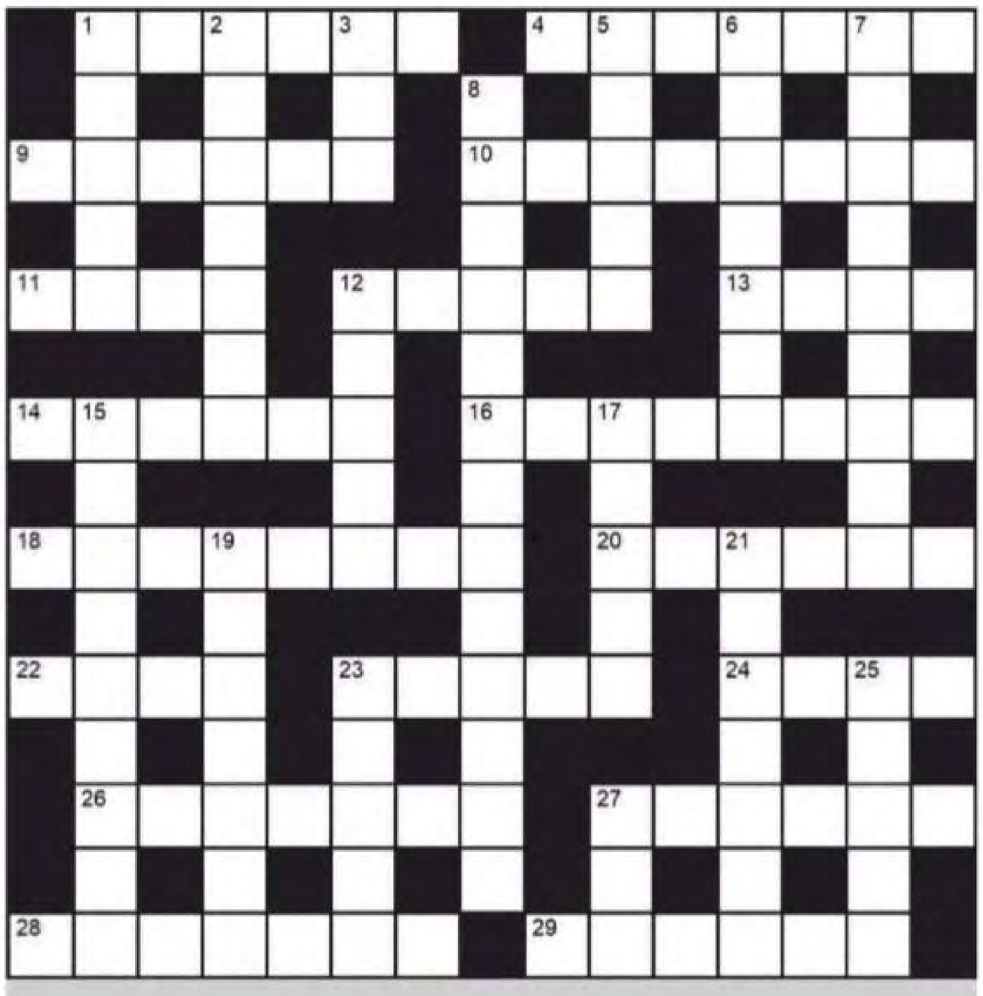


SPIRIT OF THE NORTH: COCKTAIL RECIPES AND STORIES FROM SCANDINAVIA
by Selma Slabiak
TeNeues, €25
ISBN 978-3961711529
Plant-based cocktails inspired by personal stories of mixologist Selma Slabiak.



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JOSEPH DALTON HOOKER
by Seamus O'Brien
Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, £40
ISBN 978-1842466568
Story of Joseph Dalton Hooker's 1847 expedition to Sikkim, in the eastern Himalayas.

Crossword



ACROSS

1 *Hydrangea* species with flattened flowerheads – I removed from *Spiraea*, perhaps (6)
4 Strangely tactile sort of trellis (7)
9 Figure in a formal garden? (6)
10 Genus of sedum-like plant aka stonecrop – or I hold a mutation (8)
11 Curved shape, element of popular chillies (4)
12 Regular GQT panellist's fruit seed state (5)
13 William ___, 18th-century landscapist (eg at Rousham) (4)
14 The genus of hop-hornbeam – could be made into a story (6)
16 'Sweet rocket' genus sadly perishes (8)
18 Eg Westonbirt and Harcourt (8)
20 Herbs of the onion genus – initially close by bee colonies (6)
22 Eg a raspberry plant stem (4)
23 Ribs of leaves (5)
24 Dog rose's autumnal fruits (4)
26 Appropriate name of a *Mentha pulegium* with strong vertical stems (7)
27 Pea '___', a mangetout – and a French red wine (6)
28 The poppy genus (7)
29 A snowdrop with unusually long pedicels – attractive thing! (6)

DOWN

1 See 27 down
2/25 Insectivorous perennial of eg genus *Sarracenia* (7,5)
3 A bitter-scented shrub, captured by Bruegel (3)
5 Hawaiian greeting for a vigorous climbing double-flowering rose (5)
6 *Clematis* with light-blue tepals… shine like a star (7)
7 In its 'Lesser' form it's a yellow-flowering perennial in buttercup family (9)
8 Common name for *Muscari* plants (5,8)
12 Popular yellow hybrid tea rose – named when the Second World War was ending (5)
15 Genus of thistle-like plants: eg *S. tinctoria* – aster 'Raul' perhaps (9)
17 Sets fire to hessian bags? (5)
19 Shrub with daisy-like flowers – sort of air aloe (7)
21 Genus of 'starflower' plants – moving in, I hope (7)
23 Fashion magazine's named series of pelargonium (5)
25 See 2 down
27/1 Native coastal plant (3,5)

SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

SOLUTIONS TO THE PLANT SPECIAL'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS 1 Tobacco plant **8** Cyclamen **12** Heathers **13** Mocha **14** Spadix **15** Prunus **16** Morus **18** Knautia **19** Madder **21** Sable **22** Oleaceae **23** Heartsease **24** Mount Etna **27** Astrantia **29** Tillandsia **32** Weedfree **34** Aroma **35** Stocks **37/39** African daisy **41** Stella **42** Stigma **43** Vines **45** Rosarian **46** Magnolia **47** Lady's slipper.
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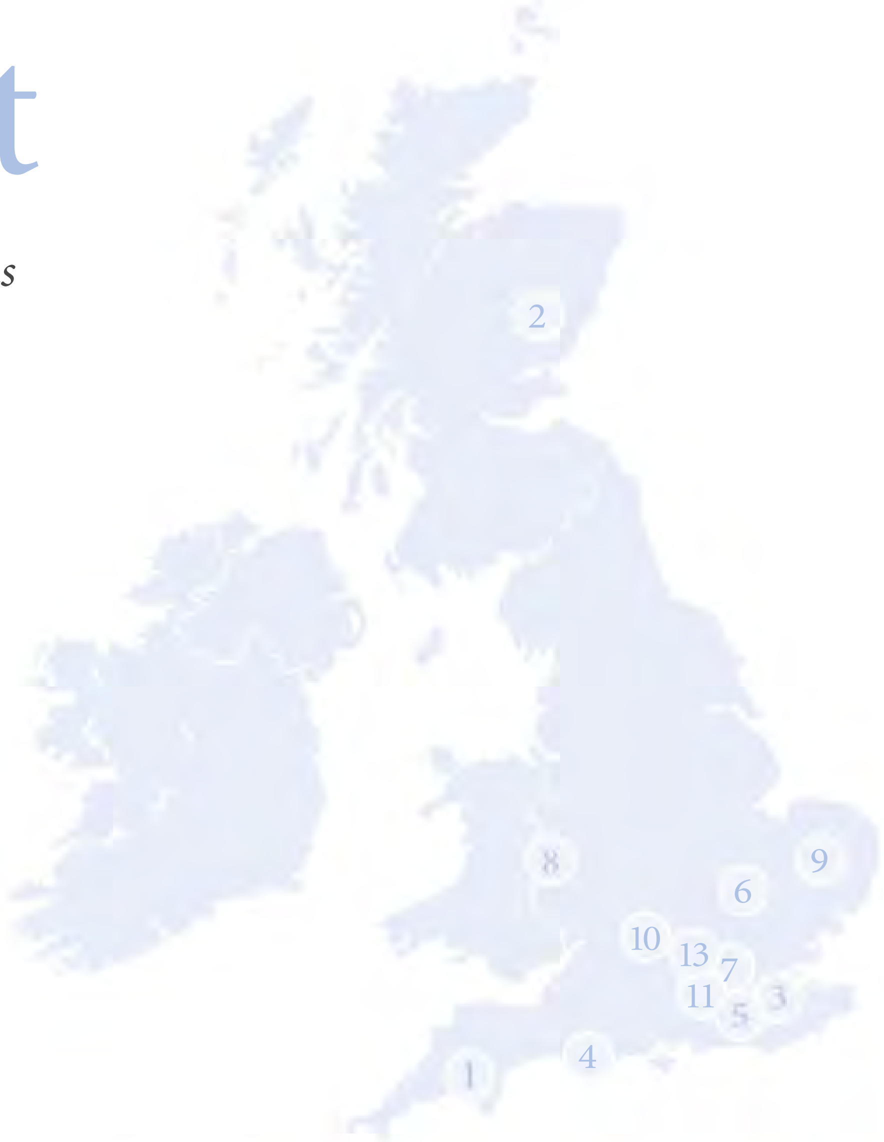

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01444 894066 | kew.org/wakehurst

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Old Warden Aerodrome, Beds SG18 9EP | shuttleworth.org/swissgarden

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Ely, Cambs CB7 5PT | 01638 721416 | chippenhamparkgardens.co.uk

10 BUSCOT PARK

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Faringdon, Oxfordshire SN7 8BU | 01367 240932 | buscotpark.com

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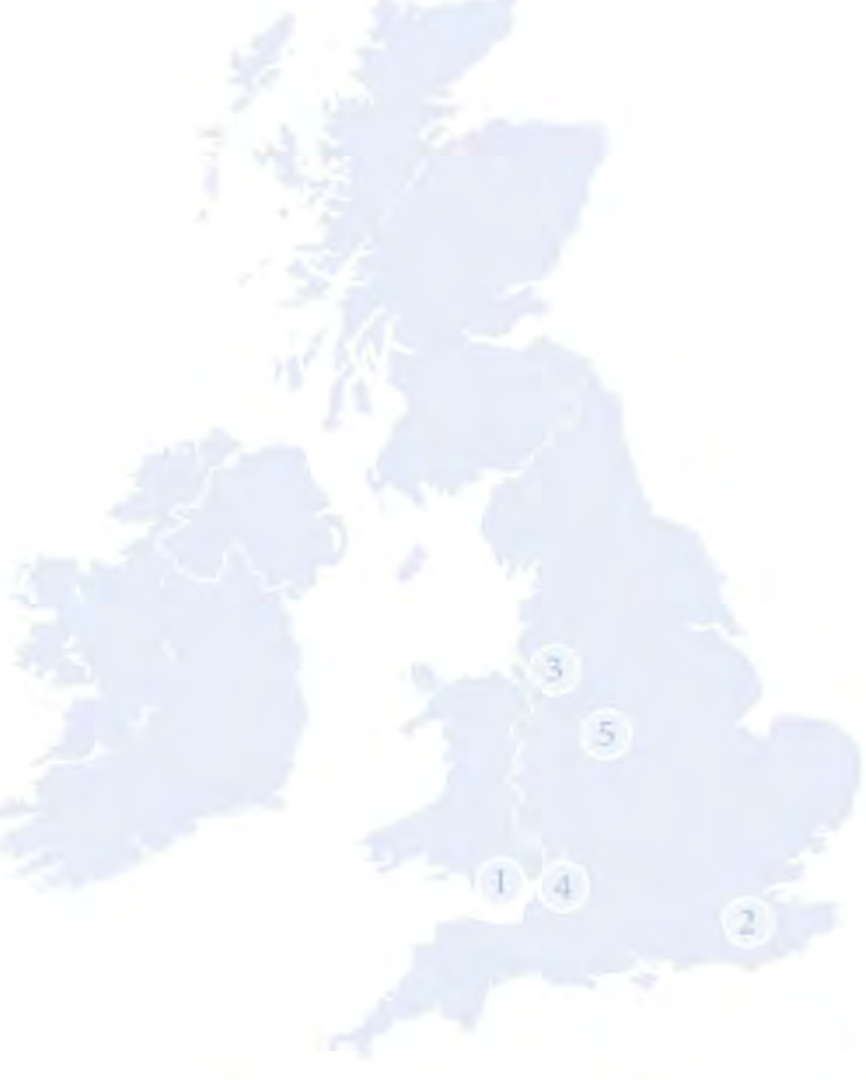

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Ide Hill, Sevenoaks, Kent TN14 6BA | 01732 868381 | nationaltrust.org.uk

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3 DUNHAM MASSEY, NATIONAL TRUST

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Dunham Massey, WA14 4SJ | 0161 941 1025 | nationaltrust.org.uk/dunham-massey

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4 DYRHAM PARK, NATIONAL TRUST

Winter is one of the best seasons to drink in the structural planting, clipped formal topiary and idyllic ponds of the formal West Garden, which is being sensitively developed as a 21st-century garden with echoes of the 17th-century. Open daily from 10am–4pm (last entry 3pm), with regular garden tours.

Dyrham Park, near Bath, Gloucestershire SN14 8HY | nationaltrust.org.uk

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Sunday **21st Apr** 10am–3pm Adm Free
Spring Plant Fair, Hall Place & Gardens,
Bourne Rd, Bexley DA5 1PQ

Sunday **28th Apr** 10am–5pm Adm £5
Fair only
Spring Plant Fair, Arundel Castle,
Arundel, W.Sussex BN18 9AB

Saturday **18th May** 1pm–4pm Adm £2
London Spring Plant Fair,
Telegraph Hill Centre, Kitto Rd, SE14 5TY

Saturday & Sunday **25th & 26th May** 2pm–5pm
Canterbury Cathedral Plant Fair
NGS Precinct Gardens Open
(www.canterbury-cathedral.org, Adm fee)
11 The Precincts, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2EH

Sunday **9th June** 12am–5pm Adm £8
Fair & Garden
Specialist Plant Fair, Sussex Prairies,
Wheatsheaf Rd, Henfield, W.Sussex BN5 9AT

Sunday **23rd June** 10am–3pm Adm Free
Summer Plant Fair, Hall Place & Gardens,
Bourne Rd, Bexley DA5 1PQ

Sunday **21st July** 11am–4pm Adm £5
Fair & Garden
Summer Plant Fair, Chawton House,
Chawton, Alton, Hants GU34 1SJ

Sunday **25th Aug** 11am–4pm Adm £2
Summer Plant Fair, The Walled Nursery,
Water Lane, Hawkhurst, Kent TN18 5DH

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Autumn Plant Fair, Borde Hill Garden,
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nationaltrust.org.uk/sissinghurst-castle-garden

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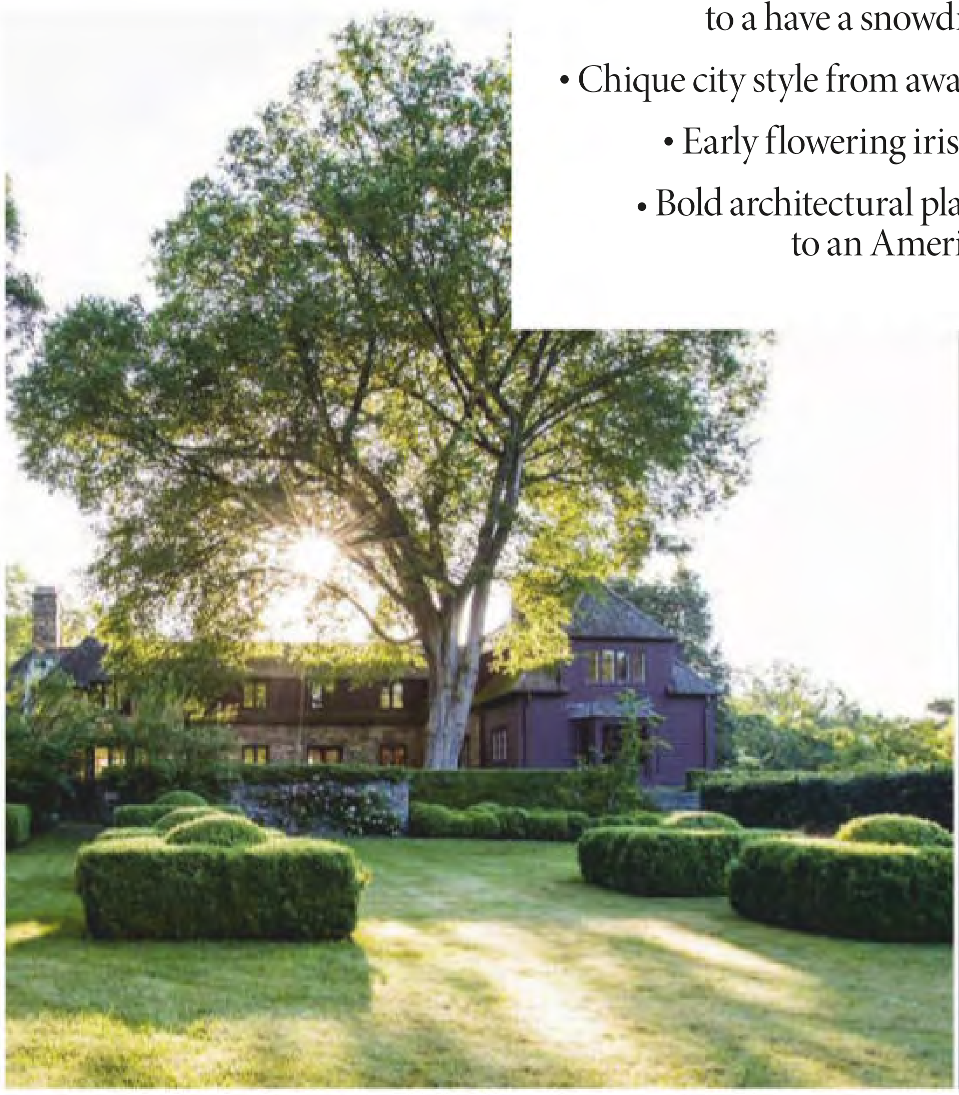

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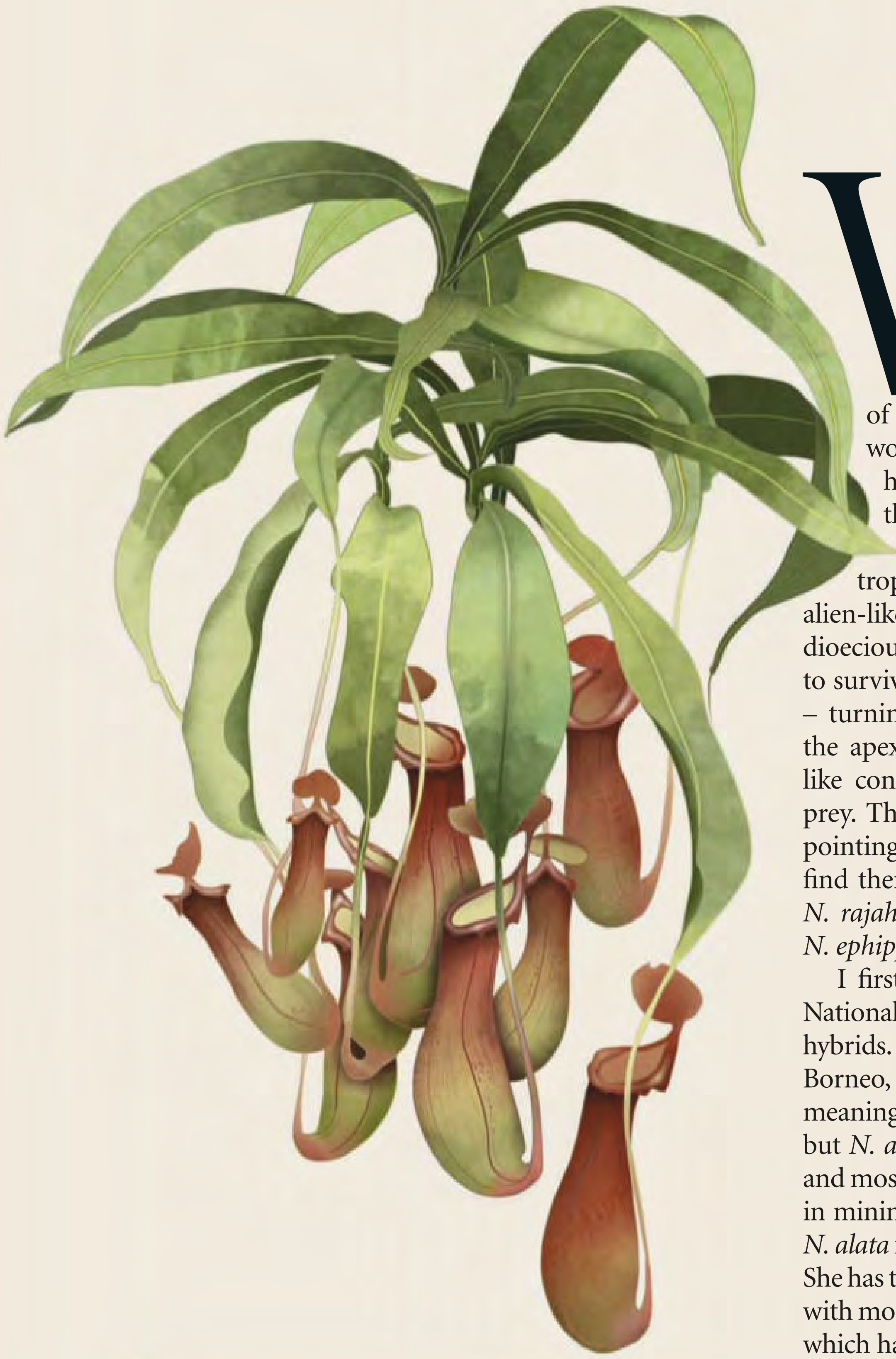
HOUSEPLANTS

The great indoors

In the first of a new series exploring the wonderful world of houseplants, glasshouse horticulturist Jess Snowball takes a look at *Nepenthes* a carnivorous plant in need of a little love and affection

WORDS **JESS SNOWBALL**
ILLUSTRATION **AGATA WIERZBICKA**



NEPENTHES ALATA X *VENTRICOSA*

What makes nepenthes such rewarding houseplants – aside from a satisfying decline in unwanted flies – is how responsive they are to love, care and affection. You can track their growth on an almost daily basis and watching your plant grow can become addictive as well as truly satisfying. In the wild nepenthes can grow in the ground as well as on rocks or on the surface of other plants; their climbing nature means they can grow in weird and wonderful ways in which it is possible to manipulate indoors. I adore them at height, so displaying them in hanging baskets gives the scrambling species the perfect opportunity to show off their natural habit.

A true carnivorous favourite, nepenthes, more commonly known as tropical pitcher plants, are notable for their beautifully decorative, almost alien-like leaf adaptation – the pitcher. Originating from tropical Asia, this dioecious group of plants, inhabits such harsh, low-nutrient environments that to survive they have had to undergo one of nature's most bizarre transformation – turning leaves into an insect-catching pitcher. Basically, the leaf's midrib at the apex has extended into a tendril that expands to form a swollen pitcher-like container. The purpose of these colourful, pitchers is to trap and digest prey. The lip of the pitcher, known as the peristome, has slippery, downwards-pointing hairs so any insects that land on this lip will slip into the pitcher and find themselves unable to climb out. Some species with larger pitchers, such as *N. rajah*, are able to trap small vertebrates, while species such as *N. lowii* and *N. ephippiata*, will digest the faeces of tree shrews.

I first encountered nepenthes as an intern at Chester Zoo, which holds the National Collection of around 170 species and many more natural and cultivated hybrids. I've since seen them growing in the wild on Mount Kinabalu in Sabah, Borneo, but they come from hugely diverse habitats, from Madagascar to Australia, meaning that a select few make excellent houseplants. I've grown a range of species, but *N. alata* x *ventricosa* (sometimes sold as *N.* x *ventrata*) is certainly the easiest and most straightforward to grow as a beginner. It is widely available and grows well in minimal humidity on a bright windowsill. My six-year-old female specimen of *N. alata* x *ventricosa* is quite the traveller, having lived in three cities and five houses. She has thrived on south-, east- and west-facing windows, and last year rewarded me with more than 30 impressive pitchers. Other easy-to-grow species are *N. sanguinea*, which has darker pitchers, and *N. ventricosa*, which has reddish pink or pale-green pitchers, both of which are also adaptable to lower humidity environments. If you want to place your nepenthes in the high humidity of a terrarium, then you might want to consider *N.* x *hookeriana* or *N.* 'Bloody Mary', one of the bushy cultivars, as both thrive in high humidity environments.

Cultivation

When deciding where to position your nepenthes it's worth remembering that most species grow in the upper canopy of rainforests in partial sunlight, so a windowsill is ideal. Those rainforests are also warm and nepenthes will thrive best if kept at a temperature of between 15ºC and 25°C.

Nepenthes' root systems are dark in colour, fragile and fibrous. They love an open, well-aerated, free-draining growing medium in which lots of moisture can be retained without being waterlogged. I find a 50:50 mix of sphagnum moss and perlite works well provided it stays moist. Many species are sold in peat, another medium in which they'll also thrive, and when this is the case I soak the root ball to tease some roots out gently from the peat, before repotting in a sphagnum moss and perlite mix. Overwatering without drainage can cause root rot but as a rule plants should never be left to dry out. Nepenthes are known to tolerate hard water, but, if you use only tap water to water them then over time impurities will build up so use rainwater in the long term to prevent a shift in unhealthy pH levels. You can apply a low rate of a balanced liquid feed throughout spring and summer, but there is no need to feed in the winter months, as growth will naturally slow in winter.

WHERE TO BUY – MAIL-ORDER SUPPLIERS
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Tel 023 8047 3314, hantsflytrap.com (by appointment only).
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Jess Snowball is glasshouse manager at the Chelsea Physic Garden, London.

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